



rious as possible, in order to make themselves the more necessary, and to increase the gains of their profession. While *apothecaries*, he insinuates, make little scruple of administering drugs not contained in the prescription of the physician, because they are more cheap, or such as are stale and perished, to the ruin of *many constitutions*, and to the loss of *many valuable lives*. And from this account it should seem, that physicians and apothecaries not unfrequently combine together, for no other purpose than to plunder the patient, and to encrease or prolong his misery and his disease. “ Experience shews, says  
 “ he, that one thing will cure most  
 “ disorders, at least as well as twenty  
 “ put together. Then why do you  
 “ add the other nineteen? Only to  
 “ swell the apothecary’s bill: nay pos-  
 “ sibly to prolong the distemper, that  
 “ the



“the doctor and he may divide the  
“ spoil \*.”

This representation of the gentlemen of the faculty may possibly not be thought very candid, nor very equitable : and if Mr. Wesley's character and conduct, as a divine, a politician, and a practitioner in physic, were to be examined with the same degree of candour that he hath exercised towards others, he would certainly not appear in the most advantageous light. At least it would be manifest, that he was far enough from *perfection*, though that is a doctrine for which he is well known to be a very zealous advocate. But, perhaps, those who are not thorough-initiated in Mr. Wesley's peculiar tenets, may not have a proper idea of what those qualities are which are necessary to constitute a perfect man.

\* Pref. to *Primitive Physic*, p. xiv. and also p. xxvii.

It is certain, that if Mr. Wesley be of this character, a regard to truth is not necessary to it: of which the Rev. Mr. Evans of Bristol can afford ample testimony †.

But however uncandid, unfair, or unjust, Mr. Wesley's representation of the gentlemen of the faculty may be, it seemed necessary to promote the sale of his *Primitive Physic*. And in this his views appear to have been answered; *sixteen editions* at least having been printed of this compilation;

† *Vide* the second edition of Mr. Evan's letter to Mr. John Wesley, in which he has been convicted of premeditated falsehood, upon the clearest and most unexceptionable evidence. Mr. Wesley's attempt towards a defence upon this subject in the newspapers, serves, *if possible*, to render him still more contemptible.

The writer of this meddles not with political disputes, but takes the liberty to observe, that some regard to truth was thought necessary, in old fashioned systems, to constitute the character of an honest man, of whatever party he might be.

and



and that this large sale has not arisen from the merit of the performance; will, I am confident, be acknowledged by every man skilled in the treatment of diseases.

The practice of physic, according to Mr. Wesley's ideas, is a very easy art. For, he informs us, "neither  
 " the knowledge of *astrology, astronomy,*  
 " *natural philosophy,* nor even *anatomy*  
 " itself, is absolutely necessary to the  
 " *quick and effectual cure of most diseases*  
 " incident to human bodies: nor yet  
 " any chymical, or exotic, or com-  
 " pounded medicine, but a single plant  
 " or fruit duly applied. So that *every*  
 " *man of common sense* (unless in some  
 " rare cases) may prescribe either to  
 " himself or his neighbour; and may  
 " be *very secure* from doing harm, even  
 " where he can do no good \*." But

\* Pref. to *Primitive Physic*, p. xi.

the facility of curing diseases was not, it seems, sufficiently understood, till the appearance of Mr. Wesley's Primitive Physic. And when this performance was announced to the world, every man who purchased it, had "a physician always in his house, and one that attends without fee or reward."

Mr. Wesley's performance would, indeed, have been a very valuable acquisition to the public, if it could really have qualified every man of common sense "to prescribe to his family as well as himself." But the truth is, that those who rely on Mr. Wesley's pamphlet, will often be led to trifle with the most dangerous diseases, and while they are forming vain expectations of obtaining relief from his insignificant prescriptions, may be led to neglect timely application for real



real and effectual assistance, and thereby suffer irreparable mischief.

Mr. Wesley's pretended remedies are of various kinds; great numbers have no mark of distinction; but he has besides these *tried* remedies, *infallible* remedies, and a third sort, which he prefers to all the rest (being probably more than infallible) and which are marked with an *asterisk*. But if the public are led to form a just estimate of the merit of Mr. Wesley's Primitive Physic, they will place little confidence in any remedies which have no better authority than his recommendation, whether they are marked *tried*, *infallible*, or distinguished by an *asterisk*.

It was not the intention of the writer of this piece, to sit down merely with a view to oppose Mr. Wesley, or to cavil at his publication. But he wished

wished to be of service to his fellow creatures. He has, therefore, interspersed occasional remarks on several of the diseases for which Mr. Wesley has attempted to prescribe: and if any of his observations should prove beneficial to mankind, it will afford him great pleasure, as his highest ambition is to be useful in his profession.



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A N

## EXAMINATION, &c.

**T**HE recipes contained in Mr. Wesley's *Primitive Physic*, are one thousand and twelve; they are therefore too numerous to be particularly animadverted on: but, from the remarks which will here be made on many of them, it will, it is presumed, be sufficiently apparent, that no person can, with any degree of safety, rely on a compilation so extremely injudicious; the pretended remedies contained therein, being often of no use, and those which might be of utility, generally unattended with such directions, or regard to times and circumstances, as would be necessary to render them efficacious; and indeed, often calculated only to produce the most dangerous and fatal effects.

Those recipes, contained in Mr. Wesley's book, on which I shall make remarks, will be taken in the order in which they lie in his pamphlet, and referred to by the numbers or figures which he has affixed to them. When I give his recipes, or make quotations from him, which I shall frequently do, his words will be distinguished by the Italic character. And as my reasons for this publication have already been given in the preface, I shall, without further introduction or apology, proceed to an examination of that profundity of medical skill and knowledge, which are contained in this incomparable system of *Primitive Physic*.

## Abortion to prevent.

No. 1. *Use a decoction of lignum guaiacum ; boiling an ounce in a quart of water.*

Of all the remedies to prevent abortion, this is one of the most improper ; for if it were to produce any effect, it would be the very reverse : as this wood contains a stimulating essential oil, it would be disposed to increase the action of the heart and arterial system ; so that this medicine, in all probability, will make the woman more liable to abort.

*In a sanguine habit, let blood.*

Mr. Wesley does not here give the least information, by which the female might know whether bleeding would be a proper remedy ; nor does he consider, that not one in a hundred of his readers know the meaning of the word *sanguine*. Indeed, he seems resolved, at his first setting out, to give the public a satisfactory evidence of his total want of medical knowledge. Another man would have said, if there is a full, strong pulse, then bleeding in small quantities, and at stated intervals, according to the strength and other circumstances of the patient, will diminish the quantity of blood in the vessels, and thus lessen the force of the circulation in the uterus, and so prevent abortion.

For an Ague.

No. 3. *Go into the cold bath just before the cold fit.*

There are many cases and circumstances in which the *cold bath* would be absolutely improper, as well as dangerous ; and those are by no means cleared up in another part of Mr. W.'s pamphlet, where he gives some general directions to those who are to use it.



No. 11. *Make six middling pills of cobwebs. Take one a little before the cold fit ; two a little before the next fit ; (suppose the next day) the other three, if need be, a little before the third fit.—This seldom fails.*

Here Mr. W. appears to have excelled himself ; he orders his cobwebs to be made into pills, but he does not reflect that there must be some viscid substance added, to form a dry, light matter into pills ; so that it is to be presumed Mr. W. is at the trouble of making the cobwebs into pills himself. But as the mind has a wonderful effect on the body, and in no disease more than the present, I would recommend to Mr. W. to have his patient, *a little before the co'd fit*, carried into a room where this wonder-working remedy hangs in clusters from the ceiling ; here the imagination would have its full force, and astonishing cures perhaps be performed.

No. 12. *Two tea spoonfuls of sal prunella, an hour before the fit.*

Mr. W. pays no attention whatever to the dose of a very powerful neutral salt ; some tea spoons may contain *one*, others, *two scruples* ; surely, more precision was necessary ; but, perhaps, like the verdigris, this may be an error of the press, which has gone through six, or peradventure sixteen editions.

No. 17. *Eat a lemon, rind and all.*

This prescription, which appears at first sight very simple, is exceedingly compounded, as in this remedy is contained acescent, mucilaginous, bitter, and watery juices. Further, no attention whatever is paid to the size of the lemon which is to be *eat* ; some weigh four ounces, others only half an ounce, or six drams ; and yet Mr. W. advises a *lemon, rind and all*, to be taken for the cure of an ague.

No. 19. *In the hot fit, take 10, 12, or 15 drops of laudanum.*

This is a very dangerous remedy, and, I believe, never advised before, in the hot fit of an intermittent fever; as, in all probability, it would heat the system much more, endanger delirium, and convert the present disease into a continued fever, which every good practitioner is anxious to avoid.

No. 21. *Boil a handful of rib wort in whey, drink this warm an hour before the fit comes, and lie down and sweat.*

Mr. W. has a prodigious command over the constitution; it obeys his nod, and is subservient to his will; producing sweat, and the removal of diseases, appear to be the easiest things in the world with him.

No. 22. *A tea spoonful of salt of tartar, in spring water. This also cures double tertians, triple quartans, long lasting fevers, and most diseases arising from obstructions, especially if senna be premised twice or thrice.*

There cannot be put together an assemblage of greater absurdities; as this medicine can have no other tendency than to cause the afflicted to trifle with acute diseases. In fact, in this one section is included the greatest part of the diseases incident to the human body, as the celebrated BOERHAVE says, that most diseases arise from obstruction. Mr. W.'s assertion, therefore, that this alkaline salt will cure so great a variety of disorders, must certainly be a matter of very serious consequence, as so great a number of complaints come under his description, in which salt of tartar could produce no good effect; and thus the greatest injury must often be received by those deluded persons, who are prevented, by their ill-placed confidence in this recipe of Mr. Wesley's from having recourse to such medicines as would effectually relieve them.



No. 23. *Before, yea, in the midst of the fit, take twenty drops of spirit of sulphur, in a pint of cold water.*

*Before, yea, even in the midst of the fit, Mr. W. is of opinion, that, twenty drops of spirit of sulphur, should be taken in a pint of cold water.* This can be of no use whatever; yea, it may be sometimes injurious. But as no mark is affixed to this prescription; neither an asterisk, nor the mark of infallibility; Mr. W. may possibly be willing that this recipe should not be numbered among those of the highest excellence.

No. 25. *Apply to each wrist a plaister of treacle and foot.—Tried.*

As the word *tried* is affixed to this footy application, it may be presumed that Mr. W. or his chimney-sweeper, have experienced its efficacy.

### A Double Tertian.

No. 27. *Take, before the fit, (after a purge or two.) three ounces of cichory water, half a drachm of salt of wormwood, and fifteen drops of spirit of sulphur.*

A very inelegant and unpleasant saline draught.

No. 28. *To perfect the cure, on the fourth day after you miss the fit, take two drachms of sena, half a drachm of salt of tartar, infused all night in four ounces of cichory water.*

If Mr. W. has any view in this prescription, he intends it as a purging remedy; but repeated experience has shewn purgatives to be very injurious after all kinds of agues, and the most probable method to produce a relapse.

## A Quartan Ague.

No. 29. *Apply to the future of the head, when the fit is coming, wall July-flowers, beating together the leaves and flowers with a little salt.*

It must be a subject of lamentation, that this wonderful remedy can only be procured at a certain season of the year ; but it may be some abatement of our grief to recollect, that the loss of this pretty flower may be supplied by the tulip, pink, &c. and indeed any of them, applied to the nostrils, will be productive of effects on the system, equally astonishing.

No. 35. *For a tertian or quartan, vomit an hour after the cold fit begins.*

When Mr. W. by an extraordinary fatality, hits upon a good remedy, he generally takes care to prevent its being of real service to the patient, by directing it to be administered injudiciously and improperly. At the attack of acute diseases, the matters contained in the stomach, instead of going through the digestive process, become often putrid, acid, &c. which increases the symptoms of the disease. Practitioners, therefore, at the onset of fevers, and other diseases, have found it useful to clear the stomach of offending substances, by an emetic ; and if any other good effect is expected from the vomiting, it is generally advised a little before the attack, as it has sometimes prevented the fit coming on ; but Mr. W. in contradiction to common experience, and common sense, advises his *vomit to be given an hour after the cold fit begins*. Further, as the *Primitive Physic* is intended chiefly for the unlearned, and as there are many kinds of substances which occasion vomiting, would it not have been prudent in Mr. W. to have mentioned which deserved the preference, and what would be the suitable dose, and the fluid proper to work off the vomit ?



No. 36. *Drink every morning a gill of white wine, wherein half a sliced orange is boiled.*

In this generous prescription there is no direction whether the person should drink a gill of wine for a week, a month, or a year; but it may not be improper to observe, that if a weakly and delicate woman drinks four ounces of wine every morning for any length of time, that, when it is left off, her spirits will flag for want of the stimulus, and thus an excellent woman be unhappily converted into a dram or wine drinker.

No. 39. *Take ten grains of powdered saffron before the fit, in a glass of white wine.*

Recent experience has convinced me, that saffron may be exhibited in much larger doses than Mr. W. prescribes, without producing any medicinal effects.

### St. Anthony's Fire.

No. 41. *Take a glass of tar water warm in bed, every hour, washing the part with the same.*

The disease for which Mr. W. is here pretending to prescribe a remedy, is the crisipetalous inflammation, or St. Anthony's fire; and surely then, a hot stimulating substance, which would encrease the burning heat, and all the symptoms of this troublesome and painful disease, is not very proper to be applied. Mr. W. has however thought proper to recommend it, but Dr. Lewis, who is a good physician, as well as a judicious writer, says, "That all the turpentine are  
 " hot and stimulating, they are given where inflam-  
 " matory symptoms do not forbid their use; and that  
 " TAR differs from the turpentine, or native resi-  
 " nous juices of the trees, in consequence of having  
 " received a disagreeable empyreumatic impression  
 " from the fire."

No. 42. *Drink just so much sea-water as does not vomit or purge, every morning for seven days: this is the*

*the proper measure in whatever case. It seldom fails.*

At No. 41, the patient was to drink *tar-water*, a very heating medicine; immediately after, in the same disease, *sea-water* is prescribed, which in consequence of the neutral and earthy salts dissolved in it, is a very cooling remedy. Mr. W. whose medical talents are not of the ordinary kind, undertakes to cure the very same disease both by *hot* and *cold* remedies.

No. 45. *Take two or three gentle purges.—No fever bears repeated purges better than this, especially when it affects the body.*

As this is an inflammation peculiar to weak and irritable habits, those labouring under this disease are not well able to bear evacuation; and indeed there are few disorders where it is more necessary to keep up the strength of the patient than the present.

### Apoplexy.

No. 49. *To prevent, use the cold bath, and drink only water.*

As the apoplexy is a disease which carries off great numbers, should not any person who intended to give medical advice, have been more explicit? Mr. W. says, in his note, that an *apoplexy* is a total loss of all sense and voluntary motion, commonly attended with a strong pulse, hard breathing and snorting. It is evident, from this definition of the disease, the sanguineous apoplexy is intended. Now I will venture to affirm, that immersing suddenly in the cold bath, will be one of the most likely means of reproducing this dangerous and often fatal disease. Here is no attention paid to age, sex, constitution, or other circumstances, though they are absolutely necessary to be attended to, in a complaint of so serious a nature.



No. 50. *In the fit put a handful of salt into a pint of cold water, and if possible pour it down the throat of the patient.*

Mr. Wesley here says, that *if possible* in the fit of apoplexy, a pint of salt and water should be poured down the throat of the patient; *and then he will immediately come to himself.* But if he had not been totally ignorant of the disease, or if he had understood his own definition of it, (See No. 49.) he would have known that it was totally impossible to force down any quantity of fluid during the fit. He says himself, that the disease is attended with *a loss of all sense and voluntary motion.* Now, is not the action of deglutition a voluntary motion, and can it be restored any other way, than by removing the disease?

No. 51. *Fill the mouth with salt.*

Mr. W. here recommends filling the mouth with salt; but the most likely consequence of this would be, *killing the patient,* by the stoppage of all respiration.

No. 52. *Blow powder of white hellebore up the nose.*

One of the most stimulating errhines in the whole *materia medica*, is here ordered to be blown up the nostrils, in the sanguineous apoplexy; than which, nothing can be more improper or dangerous.

*Fix a cupping glass, without scarifying, to the nape of the neck, and another to each shoulder.*

One of Mr. Wesley's shining qualities, is the adroitness with which he renders a good remedy inefficacious, whenever he happens to blunder upon one. Here, the cupping glasses recommended are very proper; but the directing them to be applied without scarifying, is in the highest degree absurd. By the scarification, the blood vessels would have been unloaded of their contents, and the pressure upon the brain taken off; and therefore, what the Author of the *Primitive Physic* advises to be avoid-

ed, would be the most probable method of restoring the patient.

No. 53. *If the fit be soon after a meal, do not bleed, but vomit.*

These directions are essentially wrong, and if pursued, might be fatal to many persons who would be recovered.

No. 54. *Rub the head, feet, and hands strongly, and let two strong men carry the patient upright, backward and forward about the room.*

This advice is vague and insignificant, as it is suffering people to trifle in a disease which requires the most expeditious methods of relief.

No. 55. *A seton in the neck, with a low diet, has often prevented a relapse.*

This advice for preventing a relapse, is very proper ; but the patient must first be brought out of the apoplectic fit, which he never can be, by any of Mr. W's prescriptions.

*But send for a good physician immediately.*

These words of Mr. W. are contained in the latter part of the fifty-second section ; after prescribing several of the most absurd and preposterous remedies that could easily enter the mind of man, he advises a good physician to be sent for. The writer hopes that this is the only part of Mr. W's advice, to which any regard will be paid, in so dangerous a disease ; where the omission of the application of the proper and judicious remedies, *only* for a few minutes, may be the cause of the death of the patient.

### The Asthma.

No. 57. *Take a pint of cold water every night, as you lie down in bed.*

No. 58.



No. 58. *A pint of cold water every morning, washing the head therein immediately after, and using the cold bath once a fortnight.*

No. 60. *Half a pint of tar water twice a day.*

No. 61. *Drink sea water every morning.*

No. 62. *Live a fortnight on boiled carrots.—It seldom fails.*

All these pretended remedies for asthmatic disorders, are so inadequate to the purpose, and manifestly so inefficacious, that they *only* do mischief, by preventing those who confide in them from applying for such advice as might afford them real relief.

No. 65. *For present relief, vomit with a quart or more of warm water. The more you drink of it, the better.*

In fits of the asthma, the lungs are often greatly loaded and distended with blood; so that vomiting, by whatever means excited, may be productive of much mischief. Mr. W. in his *Primitive Physic*, gives no rules respecting times or circumstances; but remedies are to be used *indiscriminately*, at all times, and in all circumstances. Here, however, I must take the liberty of observing, that I have found, from repeated experience in the various methods of restoring health, that much depends on remedies being exhibited at the proper period of a disease; and therefore they lose much of their efficacy, when exhibited by a person who is inattentive to a proper distinction of these particulars, which, though seemingly trifling, are really of the utmost importance.

### A dry, or convulsive Asthma.

No. 66. *Juice of radishes relieves much.*

No. 67. *A cup of strong coffee.*

No. 69. *A tea made with hyssop, or ground-ivy, or daisy flowers and liquorice.*

No. 70. *A pint of new milk, morning and evening. — This has cured an inveterate asthma.*

No. 71. *Use the cold bath thrice a week.*

No. 72. *Beat fine saffron small, and take eight or ten grains every night.*

A very dangerous disease, rendered more so, by several trifling and insignificant prescriptions.

No. 73. *Dry and powder a toad, make it into pills, and take one every hour, till the convulsions cease.*

Of all Mr. W.'s remedies for the convulsive asthma, *powder of toad* is the most curious; but it is suited to the credulity of the frequenters of the Foundery.

No. 74. *Take from three to five grains of ipecacuanha every morning; or from five to ten grains every other evening. Do this, if need be, for a month or six weeks. Five grains usually vomit. In a violent fit, take a scruple instantly.*

It is always adviseable, before the exhibition of vomits, to examine the pulse and the state of the constitution in general; for, if the blood-vessels should be loaded, the action of vomiting may perhaps endanger a rupture, and instantly prove fatal.

### Bleeding at the Nose, (to prevent).

No. 77. *Drink whey largely every morning, and eat much of raisins.*

No. 78. *To cure it, apply to the neck, behind, and on each side, a cloth dipped in cold water.*

No. 79. *Wash the temples, nose, and neck with vinegar.*

No. 80. *Snuff up vinegar and water.*

No. 81.



No. 81. *Chew nettle root, spitting out the juice.*

No. 82. *Put up the nostrils powdered betony, with a little salt.*

No. 83. *Hold a red hot poker under the nose.*

No. 84. *Steep a rag in sharp vinegar, burn it, and blow it up the nose with a quill.*

No. 85. *In a violent case, go into a pond or river.*

The *red-hot poker* prescription (No. 83.) is undoubtedly new; and I am confident no one will dispute the honour of its invention with Mr. Wesley. I shall, however, beg leave to recommend this caution in the use of it, that no one should attempt the application, who has not a very steady hand, lest the patient should bear the marks of his effectual cure, in a manner that might induce a wicked world to think, the case had been such as required the adhibition of Leake's pills, rather than Wesley's poker; nor could an accident of this kind easily be remedied; as, I believe, Mr. *Patence*, the only gentleman, who, in this age, professes the Taliacotian art, now no longer carries on his nose-making and nose-mending manufactory.

But, to be serious; an hæmorrhage from the nose, is, in general, a very salutary effort of nature, to empty the loaded vessels of the head; so that such discharges of blood should by no means be hastily suppressed, as very large quantities may be thus slowly evacuated, without inducing much weakness in the system; so that this accidental hæmorrhage tends greatly to relieve, and often to cure stubborn disorders of the head, eyes, &c. whereas, if imprudently checked by astringents, internally or externally applied, such stoppage of the flux of the blood, may often be productive of inflammation of the neighbouring parts, and sometimes even apoplexy and palsy may be the consequence of such injudicious prescriptions as are given in the *Primitive Physic*.

Spitting

## Spitting of Blood.

No. 93. *Take half a pint of stewed prunes for two or three nights.*

No. 94. *A glass of decoction of onions.*

No. 95. *Two spoonfuls of juice of nettles every morning, and a large cup of decoction of nettles every night.*

No. 96. *Take frequently a spoonful of the juice of nettles and plantane.*

No. 97. *Three spoonfuls of sage juice in a little honey.*

No. 98. *Half a tea spoonful of Barbadoes tar on sugar at night.*

Instead of making a comment on each of these remedies, which the writer is thoroughly convinced can be of little or no use in a spitting of blood; he will content himself with observing, that it requires more medical skill than Mr. W. seems possessed of, to discover whether the discharge of blood issues from the mouth, the lungs, or the stomach; and then it is necessary to be so far acquainted with the circulation as to be capable of judging whether the discharge is arterial or venous blood; and further, to understand so much of the history of diseases, as to know the cause of the hæmorrhage, that is, whether the bleeding arises from an increased action of the arteries, from a relaxation, or from a rupture of the vessels.

## Vomiting Blood.

No. 99. *Take two spoonfuls of nettle juice.*

No. 100. *One spoonful of the juice of quinces.*

No. 101. *A quarter of a pint of decoction of nettles and plantane, two or three times a day.*

Hæmorr-



Hæmorrhages, from whatever part they arise, are disposed to continue till they prove fatal, or, which is much more common, they naturally cease ; for when the vessels are sufficiently emptied of their contents, they are of course disposed to contract, and no more blood is thrown out. And the reader may be assured, that one or other of these terminations must be the event, if any reliance is placed on Mr. W.'s internal or external remedies, for the greater part of them do not bid fair to be of any advantage in the different bleedings advised for.

The observations I have made on the various hæmorrhages which Mr. W. treats of, should be well considered in the treatment of them ; for if astringents and repellents are indiscreetly and injudiciously prescribed, they may do irreparable mischief, in cases where a mere discharge of blood would have proved salutary.

### Blifters.

No. 104. *On the feet, occasioned by walking, are cured by drawing a needle-full of worsted through them, clip it off at both ends, and leave it till the skin peels off.*

In this case it would be better, that no wound should be made, as the watery fluids extravasated from the stimulus of walking, will generally be absorbed during a night's rest, and the blistered part restored to its natural state.

### Boils.

No. 105, to 108. *Are several external applications to promote suppuration. 'Tis proper to purge also.*

If the habit of body should be in a good state when these external inflammations arise, the suppuration will be good, and the boils heal readily ; but on the

the other hand, if the constitution is scorbutic, or the juices altered from their natural state, neither the above external remedies, nor purgatives, will compleat the cure.

### Hard Breasts.

No. 109. *Apply turnips roasted till soft, then mashed, and mixed with oil of roses. Change this twice a day, keeping the breast very warm with flannel.*

If it be only a small indolent tumor, it would be better that nothing be done, as even the warmth of the above poultice, and the repeated application of flannel, have, by their stimulus, sometimes converted such hardneſſes into cancers, a species of diſeaſes, of all others the moſt to be dreaded; whereas, by omitting the uſe of external means, ſuch indurations have remained in an indolent ſtate during the whole life of the perſon.

### A Cancer in the Breast.

No. 129. *Of thirteen years ſtanding, was cured by frequently applying red poppy water, plantane and roſe water, mixt with honey of roſes. Afterwards the waters uſed alone perfected the cure.*

Of this extraordinary cure we have no evidence but Mr. Weſley's *ipſe dixit*.

No. 130. *Uſe the cold bath daily, (this has cured many.) This cured Mrs. Bates of Leiſterſhire, of a cancer in her breaſt, a conſumption, a ſciatica, and rheumatism, which ſhe had near twenty years. She bathed daily for a month, and drank only water.*

We ſhould be glad to be informed, in what part of Leiſterſhire Mrs. Bates lives; it is a county of ſome extent, and if the lady really exiſts any where, it would have been proper to have given a more particular direction. We are induced to ſay this, becauſe the relation



tion is too improbable to be credited by any persons of common understanding.

No. 132. *Rub the whole breast morning and evening with spirits of hartshorn.*

Mr. W. appears to have no idea of the difference between such a tumour in the breast, as is called by the surgeons a scirrhus, and the exulceration termed a cancer. As I have observed before (and I cannot help repeating it) it is not at all uncommon for women to have little swellings arise on their breast from various causes, which, if let alone, hardly ever terminate ill either to the general health, or to the part affected. But if pretenders to medical knowledge or designing quacks, advise hartshorn, or other stimulants, to be rubbed upon the part, with a view to discuss such tumors, a greater secretion of watery fluids is brought to the breast from the use of such stimuli; and thus what was at first a very slight complaint, has been often converted into an incurable cancer. The writer declares with the greatest concern, that he has more than once seen in consequence of mal-practice, such an unhappy termination take place; and he most earnestly advises those who have any complaints of the breast, to consult those who are possessed of skill and humanity in the profession.

No. 135. *Take horse spurs, and dry them by the fire till they will beat to powder, sift and infuse two drachms in two quarts of ale; drink half a pint every six hours; new milk warm.—It has cured many. Tried.*

No. 136. *Apply goose dung and celandine beat well together, and spread on a fine rag. It will both cleanse and heal the sore.*

Mr. W. advises *horse spurs* as an internal medicine, and *goose dung* as an outward application; together with many other remedies for the cure of cancers,

equally unaccountable. It is a melancholy truth, that ignorant men have always curatives in abundance for incurable complaints : as for the medical virtues of the many prescriptions advised by Mr. W. for cancers, there can be little more objection to them, than to his powder of toad in the convulsive asthma.

### A Cancer in the Mouth.

No. 141 to 150, Mr. W. has prescribed several external applications for the cure of cancers affecting the mouth ; and altho' one has the mark of *infallibility* affixed to it, and another the word *tried* ; notwithstanding all his boasted remedies, it will be highly prudent in so serious a complaint to apply to a good surgeon, who, it may reasonably be presumed, will make use of those applications which his experience and judgment inform him are the most likely to prove successful.

I shall conclude my observations on cancers with one general remark ; which is, that interested and designing men have called every ulcer of *difficult cure*, which attacks the breast or mouth, a cancer ; and unfortunately the person so afflicted is unable to distinguish the one from the other. But it may safely be affirmed, that no real cancer was ever cured, it being a disease dependant on the laws of fermentation, and for that reason cannot be eradicated out of the constitution ; as one particle of cancerous matter remaining, is sufficient to renew all the aggravated symptoms of this horrid distemper. It is well known that experienced and able surgeons daily cure the worst ulcers ; and it is equally well known, that the humane and worthy part of that profession lament the many impostors who are every day starting up, to deceive the public with their pretended nostrums, and which too often, by their corrosive applications, increase the misery and hasten the death of the unhappy sufferer.

Children.



## Children.

No. 157. *To prevent the rickets and weakness, dip them in cold water every morning till they are eight or nine months old; afterwards their hands and feet.*

The cold bath may not be improper for children, naturally of a good constitution, though these seldom require its use; for in the cases where this remedy is advised, it is generally in consequence of some diseases, which have weakened and relaxed their tender frame, and therefore Mr. W. ought to have been a little more explicit; however, I shall here take the liberty of giving a few hints relative to the use of the cold-bath, in such cases, which if attended to, may be beneficial.

1st. As the stomach and bowels of young children are very apt to be disordered, it undoubtedly would be improper to use this remedy, when the child is affected with complaints of the first passages, as vomiting, purging, &c.

2dly. If any eruption should arise on the skin, the cold-bath might prove a repellent, and therefore would have a tendency to be highly injurious; as sometimes by suddenly striking in only a few pimples, an internal inflammation or fever has been brought on, the consequences of which have proved fatal.

3dly. If any fever should arise, whether from teething or any other cause, it would be extremely dangerous to use the cold-bath.

After a child is eight or nine months old, Mr. W. restrains the use of the cold-bath to the hands and feet only. If the child thrives from its being dipped in water, there can be no solid objection advanced to its being applied to the body universally after that age.

*No roller should ever be put round their bodies, nor any stays used. Instead of them, when they are put into short petticoats, put a waistcoat under their frocks.*

The easy method of dressing young children, is extremely well calculated for the promotion of health, and must be advantageous to the constitution; but the public are indebted to the ingenious Dr. CADOGAN, for this improvement in the easy dressing of children: it is however not Mr. Wesley's method to acknowledge from whence he borrows his information, or whose words he makes use of. Whether justice be any part of *his* theological system or not, he has long been eminent for paying no attention to literary justice.

*'Tis best to wean a child when seven months old.*

It certainly would not be best. It would be much better to let the child have the breast two or three months longer; as no food can be substituted at that age so proper or so nourishing. The coagulable matter does not then abound too much, nor has the milk any pernicious properties, as I am convinced from experiment.

*Let them go bare-footed and bare-headed, till they are three or four years old at least.*

In many cases the going *bare-headed* at so early an age would be very improper, as there are not a few children who have not a sufficient quantity of osseous matter to prevent external injuries.

*No child should touch any spirituous or fermented liquor, nor animal food, before two years old. Their drink should be water; tea they should never taste till ten or twelve years old; milk, milk-porridge and water-gruel are the proper breakfast for children.*

These directions are undoubtedly very proper, and it would have been well if all Mr. Wesley's prescriptions



scriptions had been equally innocent and unexceptionable.

Mr. W. has given sundry directions respecting young children and their diseases; but I must do him the justice to observe, that he has never once recommended *Godfrey's cordial*. And, indeed, this is a very pernicious opiate, however frequently it may be administered by ignorant nurses. They give it to children for their own ease, without considering or understanding its tendency. It has unquestionably been productive of much mischief; it tends to ruin the constitutions of children, and the consequences of taking it have been much more frequently fatal than is generally apprehended. It is the earnest wish of the writer, that this hint may be duly attended to by parents and those who have the care of young children. The state of our national population is at too low an ebb, for the lives of children to be sacrificed to the ignorance of old women, or to the indolence of nurses.

### Chin Cough, or Hooping Cough.

No. 158. *Use the cold bath daily.*

I do not know upon what principle the cold bath can be advised in this complaint. From the violent and long fits of coughing there is often much danger of suffocation, and sometimes the agitation during the fits is so violent as to rupture one or more of the blood-vessels of the lungs; so that in every point of view this remedy, by loading the internal vessels more with blood, is likely to be highly injurious.

*In desperate cases change of air alone has cured.*

Mr. W. after prescribing several insignificant remedies, says, "change of air alone has cured." In this direction he is perfectly right, but I would improve upon his advice, and earnestly recommend the  
change

change of air at the very beginning of this very troublesome disease, as experience has convinced me that more real good may be done by this than by any other means.

I will here take the opportunity of making a few observations on the whooping cough, which may, perhaps, be not unworthy of attention.

1st. I am clearly convinced, that this disorder arises from infectious matter, and, like other diseases, produced from a similar cause, it has its beginning, progress, and decline; so that when it is past its acme, if an old woman happens to come in at the declension of this complaint, and advises any thing ever so absurd, the cure is attributed to that; and indeed the same reasoning holds good with regard to many of Mr. W.'s *infallibles* or *tried* remedies.

2dly. Medicine can do very little with regard to this disease, and yet it requires the attention of a good practitioner; for, if the violence of the cough produces *any inflammation of the breast*, an occasional or even repeated bleeding will be undoubtedly proper; or if *costive*, gentle laxatives will be highly necessary; or, if the *phlegm should become too viscid, and thrown up with difficulty*, expectorating medicines should be administered.

3dly. *Asses Milk*, persevered in for six or eight weeks, has done essential service in this disease, as by its balsamic qualities, and the light nourishment it affords, the juices are rendered mild and bland, which may often prevent the inflammatory state of the disease, or if it has come on, prevent its arising to any considerable degree; and thus exulceration of the lungs, or hectic fever, be kept off; so that the patient may get through this troublesome and tedious complaint without the danger commonly attending it.



## Cholera Morbus.

No. 166. *Drink two or three quarts of cold water, if strong ; of warm water, if weak.*

No. 167. *Drink a draught of vinegar and water.*

No. 168. *Boil a chicken an hour in two gallons of water, and drink of this till the vomiting ceases.*

These are insignificant remedies, prescribed by Mr. W. in a very serious disease ; but it may be presumed that the pain, uneasiness, &c. will generally oblige those who are attacked with this complaint, to have recourse to proper advice ; which, indeed, is absolutely necessary ; for if this violent affection of the stomach and bowels is not removed within forty-eight hours, it brings on such a universal debility of the whole system, as generally proves fatal.

No. 169. *Take six grains of laudanum.*

As Mr. W. uses the word *grains*, he must undoubtedly mean *solid opium*. Now, opium is one of those *Herculean medicines*, which he so pathetically dissuades his readers from the use of, in his preface ; and yet he here prescribes a dose of this powerful narcotic, which would, in all probability, cause ninety-nine persons out of a hundred *to sleep for ever*. In disorders in common, the Faculty seldom administer above one grain, and scarcely ever exceed two grains. It is true, that Mr. BROMFIELD and Mr. POTT have lately given this drug in larger doses, in extraordinary surgical cases with great success ; but I believe these gentlemen have never yet ventured to direct, at the first or second exhibition of this medicine, six grains for a dose ; but a remedy that would be safe and useful in the hands of these skilful and eminent practitioners, becomes a dangerous weapon in the hands of the ignorant and unskilful.

## The Colic, (in the Fit.)

No. 180. *Drink a pint of cold water.—Tried.*

No. 181. *A quart of warm water.—Tried.*

No. 182. *As largely as possible of warm tar-water.*

No. 183. *Or a pint of water in which a red hot flint is quenched.*

This inimitable professor of physic, prescribes *hot* and *cold* remedies in the same breath. A pint of cold water, he says, is a *tried* remedy for the colic; but if you are not satisfied with that, a *quart of warm water* is another *tried* remedy for the same disorder, and will do full as well. And if you should not relish either of these curious prescriptions, he advises you to drink *as largely as possible of warm tar water*; or that you may have another choice, *a pint of water in which a red hot flint is quenched*. Two of these watery remedies are *tried*, and two, it seems, are *untried*; but I am of opinion they are equally infallible; though if any one deserves the preference, it is the tar water.

No. 186. *Take thirty drops of spirits of turpentine in a glass of water.*

If the person affected with the colic, is of a strong, or an inflammatory habit; or if there be any obstruction in the bowels, this remedy must prove exceedingly injurious.

No. 187. *Or from two scruples to half a dram of yellow peel of orange, powdered, in a glass of water.*

As half a dram is 30 grains, and two scruples 40 grains, would it not have been a little more methodical, to have ordered the dose of orange peel to be taken, from half a dram to two scruples?

No. 188,



No. 188. *Beat together into a cake, one part of stoned raisins of the sun, and three parts of juniper berries ; eat more or less, according to the pain.*

Is the patient to eat an ounce, or a pound ?

No. 189. *Take from 30 to 60 drops of oil of aniseed, on a lump of sugar.*

As this essential oil, like all others, possesses a considerable degree of stimulus, it ought to be taken with much caution, of which Mr. W. appears to have no conception ; but with a want of precision which seems natural to him, he advises 30 or 60 drops of oil of aniseed indiscriminately.

### Bilious Colic.

No. 194. *Give a spoonful of sweet oil every hour. This has cured one judged at the point of death.*

If the experiment has been made only upon one person “at the point of death,” I hope, in so violent a disease, that other aids will be called in to prevent the patient being brought into so much danger. In general, a good practitioner finds this disease yields very readily ; so that such imminent danger may be easily avoided.

No. 197. *Mrs. Watts, by using the cold bath two-and-twenty times in a month, was entirely cured of an hysteric colic, fits, and convulsive motions, continual sweatings and vomiting, wandering pains in her limbs and head, with total loss of appetite.*

This recovery of Mrs. Watts is, unquestionably, a very surprising one, and would deserve little credit, were it not for the very satisfactory manner in which it is authenticated. Mrs. Watts, by the use of the cold bath, was entirely cured, Mr. Wesley informs us, not only of an hysteric colic, continual sweatings and vomiting, wandering pains in her limbs  
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and head, and also of a total loss of appetite into the bargain. All this is sufficiently marvellous ; but perhaps an inquisitive reader might be tempted to enquire who Mrs. Watts is, and where she dwells, whether in England, Scotland, Ireland, or America ; but these trifling circumstances, the sagacious Mr. W. chuses to bury in profound silence.

No. 198. *In the fit, drink half a pint of water, with a little wheat flour.*

No. 199. *Warm lemonade.*

No. 200. *A glass full of vinegar.*

An hystERIC COLIC is the general consequence of a weak state of the stomach and bowels, in which acidity is mostly predominant ; and therefore the glass of vinegar or lemonade must, in every point of view, be highly injurious.

### A Nervous Colic.

No. 204. *Use the cold bath daily, for a month:*

In this disease, Mr. W. advises the cold bath indiscriminately to be used for a month ; but there are many circumstances, with regard to the nervous colic, which may render this remedy extremely improper ; not to mention the length of time during which it would be necessary to persevere in the use of it.

No. 205. *Take quicksilver and aqua sulphurata daily, for a month.*

Upon what principle quicksilver and aqua sulphurata (which is a diluted vitriolic acid) is to cure the nervous colic, is very difficult to ascertain ; to me, these remedies do not seem to promise any good effects ; but, on the contrary, in a weak state of the bowels, would rather exasperate the disease.

In a note, Mr. W. says this colic is frequently " termed the dry belly-ach." I believe these two disorders



orders of the bowels, can only be called the same diseases, by those persons, who, like Mr. W. are ignorant of the nature of the symptoms which constitute the two complaints ; as it is generally understood by good practitioners, that the hysteric and nervous colic are one and the same disease ; and not to be confounded with the colica pictonum, or dry belly-ach.

### Colic from the Fumes of Lead, White Lead, Verdigris, &c.

No. 206. *In the fit, drink fresh melted butter, and then vomit with warm water.*

No. 208. *To prevent or cure ; breakfast daily on fat broth, and use oil of sweet almonds frequently and largely.*

This is the disorder that is generally termed the dry belly-ach, and very properly so ; but it is hardly necessary to make any remarks on this colic, as the excessive pain, and other symptoms attending it, will generally oblige the afflicted to apply for assistance ; which will be acting with much more prudence, than placing any dependance on Mr. W.'s very futile prescriptions.

In all the various colics, Mr. W. has not advised one purging or laxative remedy ; (indeed, in the bilious colic, he has prescribed a spoonful of oil) but happily, people in general, in these disorders of the stomach and bowels, take of themselves, or are advised to take, tincture of rhubarb, Daffey's elixir, or some other remedy of a similar kind ; which, by unloading the first passages of indigestible and other offending substances, will often, in a very short time, remove such colic complaints ; but when the bowels have been emptied, and the pain or other symptoms continue, or should return, then the warm and stomachic me-

*an.*  
 b. icines may generally be administered with safety, and will mostly carry off the complaint.

It may also be observed that colics attack the strong as well as the weak; and in those cases where there is a fixed pain in one part of the belly, the pulse hard and frequent, with other inflammatory symptoms, it will be highly necessary to use the lancet as soon as possible; because an inflammation is then forming in a small part of the bowels, which, if not timely removed, may in twenty-four or forty-eight hours, terminate in a mortification of the part affected; and if spirituous remedies should be imprudently used to remove this pain, having a natural tendency to increase the symptoms of the disease, they may sometimes kill in a very few hours. Many lives have been undoubtedly lost in this manner, and therefore it may often be highly dangerous for persons in colic disorders to have recourse to Mr. W's remedies of spirits of turpentine, oil of aniseed; or to double distilled waters, peppermint, or any other kind of spirituous cordial, which many good women in the country, whose medical skill may be supposed equal to that of Mr. Wesley, are too apt to recommend in such cases.

### A Consumption.

No. 211. *A beginning consumption was cured by drinking decoction of guaiacum, morning and evening, for fifteen days, (without sweating) with a light diet.*

In every view in which this medicine can be considered, it appears absolutely improper, as the guaiacum owes its medical virtues to a stimulating essential oil, which would most probably heat the system, and thus the remedy prescribed might convert a beginning consumption into a confirmed hectic. Mr. W. also, with his usual inaccuracy, only advises a decoction of the guaiacum wood, but he does not give his readers any infor-



information respecting the quantity of guaiacum to be used, or what the proportion should be between that and the watery fluid, nor whether the consumptive patient is to take it in half pints or in gallons.

No. 212. *Cold bathing has cured many deep consumptions. Tried.*

Cold bathing, Mr. W. informs us, is a tried remedy for consumptions, and “has cured many deep consumptions.” As, according to him, this is almost a specific in this disease which is so peculiar to this country, and which physicians generally find so extremely difficult of cure; it would have been well if Mr. W. had been a little more particular on this head, and informed his readers whether the cold bath cured incipient consumptions only, or in what stage of the disease, it effected the extraordinary recovery he speaks of. In so fatal a disease it certainly would have been worth while, if he really had possessed that regard for the lives of his fellow creatures which he affects, to have informed us what those kinds of consumptions were, in which the cold bath proved so surprising a specific.

Cold bathing is certainly a very easy remedy for the cure of a consumption; but Mr. W. who deals much in wonderful recoveries, has another remedy for this dangerous disease still more easy than the former. He acquaints us (at No. 213) that in three months time, a person in a *deep consumption* was perfectly restored by drinking *nothing but water, and eating nothing but water-gruel, without salt or sugar!* This was truly marvellous, and we should have been glad to have been informed where the man lives, what his name is, or to have had the story in some degree authenticated. But perhaps Mr. W’s assertion is sufficient, it may be so in the neighbourhood of Moorfields; but we believe his *veracity* is not sufficiently *established at Bristol* for his *ipse dixit* to pass there for unquestionable truth.

No. 221. *Every morning cut up a little turf of fresh earth; and lying down, breath into the hole for a quarter of an hour.—I have known a deep consumption cured thus.*

Here is another of Mr. W.'s remedies for a consumption, which needs only be mentioned to excite the readers risibility. It is a recipe indeed truly worthy the acute genius of the author of *Primitive Physic*.

No. 227. *Take in for a quarter of an hour, morning and evening, the steam of white rosin and bees wax, boiling on a hot fire-shovel.—This has cured one who was in the third stage of a consumption.*

There is no end to the discoveries of Mr. W. in the cure of consumptions: the above is as extraordinary a remedy as the recovery is astonishing; for when a person is unhappily arrived at the third stage of a consumption, the lungs are generally so deeply ulcerated, that the most able practitioners cease to have any hopes, for the disease is so far advanced as to be past the power of medicine. But Mr. W. can even perform cures then, and that by *rosin and bees-wax boiling on a hot fire-shovel*. It is however to be regretted, that we are not informed of the name of the person thus surprisngly cured, and of the place of his abode. But Mr. W.'s prudence, or art, or effrontery, is superior to that of common quacks. They generally pretend at least to give some information where the persons they have recovered are to be found; but Mr. W. is above every thing of this kind. He says, that by his recipes great cures have been performed; and to enquire of whom, and how the facts are ascertained, is an impertinence. But he should remember, that all the people of England are not votaries to implicit faith, however strongly it may actuate the patient hearers at the Foundery.



*To strengthen the body, take salt-petre half a drachm, salt of steel fifteen grains, in a quarter of a pint of water. Add two ounces of the best brandy, and sweeten it with loaf sugar ; drink two spoonfuls of this about eleven in the morning, and at five in the afternoon, washing it down with a dish of sage tea. This mixture may be repeated twice or thrice.*

This strengthening prescription is an unquestionable proof that Mr. W. is totally ignorant of *double elective attractions*, in other words, that by dissolving a neutral and metalline salt in water, two new compounds are formed ; so that the weak patient prescribed for, is neither taking salt-petre nor salt of steel, as a strengthening remedy ; but new combinations are produced by the solution, which are totally different in their medical effects on the human body, as well as in their chemical properties.

This instance, among many others, may serve to shew how unsafe it is for mankind to follow implicitly the prescriptions of ignorant pretenders, and those who, like Mr. W. are destitute of chemical or medical knowledge.

In the 10th page of his preface, he complains heavily of the physicians for introducing “ into  
 “ practice abundance of compound medicines, consisting of so many ingredients, that it was scarce  
 “ possible for common people to know which it was  
 “ that performed the cure ;” and also “ chymicals,  
 “ such as they neither had skill, nor fortune, nor  
 “ time to prepare. Yea, and dangerous ones, such  
 “ as they could not use, without hazarding life, but  
 “ by the advice of a physician.” And here this very scrupulous and affectedly cautious gentleman recommends a neutral salt, the elements of which are fixed vegetable alkali, and the nitrous acid, and also a metalline combination, whose elements are iron and the vitriolic acid : two chemical compound medicines, the nature and effects of which it is manifest  
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he is totally ignorant of. The writer thinks he may with the strictest justice apply Mr. W.'s own words to himself\*, with a small variation; "How many inconveniencies" may have been occasioned by such ignorant prescribers! "How many constitutions" may have been ruined! "How many valuable lives lost."

I shall conclude the whole of what has been said relative to consumptions, with advising those who have an obstinate cough, which occasions a great deal of viscid phlegm to be thrown up, and is attended with a sudden emaciation, and other incipient symptoms of a hectic; to apply immediately for proper assistance. Persons in this state are generally able to walk about, so that they do not consider the danger of their present situation; but the writer assures them these are the marks of a beginning consumption, therefore immediate recourse should be had to those of skill in the profession. And this is attainable even by the poor, as physicians are always ready to do every kind office to the indigent; and in the metropolis particularly, which is so honourably distinguished by the number of its charitable institutions, the poorest person need not be at a loss to procure proper advice. By attending to the disease at first, *hundreds* might every year be restored to health, who, if the disorder be once fixed, would be carried off by consumptions. I do most earnestly intreat persons of all ranks to have early advice in such affections of the breast, and by no means to neglect the cough, &c. which may be readily cured at first; but when continued some time, may become an incurable disease. The author is thoroughly convinced, from experience, that if proper precautions were used at the beginning of consumptions, not one in a hundred would die of a

\* See Preface, page xxvii.



disease, which, through neglect and inattention, carries off vast numbers every year.

### Convulsions.

No. 232. *Use the cold bath.*

No. 233. *Take a tea-spoonful of valerian root every evening.*

No. 234. *Half a drachm of misleto, powdered, every six hours.*

### Convulsions in Children.

No. 235. *Scrape piony roots fresh digged; apply what you have scraped to the soles of the feet. It helps immediately. Tried.*

### Convulsions in the Bowels of Children.

No. 236. *Give a child a quarter old, a spoonful of the juice of pellitory of the wall, two or three times a day. It goes through at once, but purges no more.*

As convulsions are not a disease, but generally the consequences of other disorders; as they arise in all habits of body, the weak, the strong, and the plethoric, being subject to them; it was necessary that Mr. W. should have attended a little to these circumstances: but as convulsions are a very frightful and alarming appearance, there are very few who will attend to his prescriptions, at least they will not, if they are under the influence of prudence.

### A Cough.

No. 350. *Every cough is a dry cough at first. As long as it continues so, it may be cured by chewing immediately after you cough, the quantity of a pepper corn of*  
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Peruvian

*Peruvian bark.* Swallow your spittle as long as it is bitter, and then spit out the wood : if you cough again, do this again. It very seldom fails to cure any dry cough. I earnestly desire every one who has any regard for his health to try this within 24 hours, after he first perceives a cough.

The bark is one of those Herculean remedies, against the use of which Mr. W. dissuades his readers, and which he says are *too strong for common men to grapple with*. He says also, that they are *edged tools* ; but that the physicians *have not yet taught them to wound at a distance* : and he adds, that *honest men are under no necessity of touching them, or coming within their reach*. And yet he recommends this formidable remedy to every person affected with a cough. Is there any consistency in this ? But he has long been distinguished for his variableness and inconsistency. But however contradictory and absurd his recipes are, it is one consolation, that like the four Herculean medicines, *honest men are under no necessity of touching them, or coming within their reach*. \*

From 251 to 272, Mr. Wesley prescribes many remedies for coughs, but they are unworthy of attention ; however, I shall here take the liberty to observe, that a cough is only the symptom of an asthma, catarrh, peripneumony, pleurifies, &c. and a good practitioner will consider what the diseases are, which occasion the cough, and will prescribe accordingly.

### To cause an easy Delivery.

No. 296. Peel, slice, and fry a large white onion, in two or three spoonfuls of the best oil, till it is tender, boil this with half a glass of water ; strain it, and drink it in the morning fasting, for two or three weeks before the time of child birth.

\* Wesley's Preface, p. 24.



Our sagacious author here prescribes *a sliced onion, first fried, and afterwards boiled*, to cause an easy delivery. It may be hoped that all the practitioners in midwifery, male and female, in this kingdom, will pay due regard to this ingenious prescription.

### A Diabetes.

No. 297. *Drink wine boiled with ginger, as much and as often as your strength will bear.*

Here is a very strange remedy prescribed for the diabetes, and no regard whatever paid to the quantity of wine to be used, or the doses of ginger to be taken; surely, in prescribing wine and ginger as a medicine, the dose, and times of exhibition, were circumstances worthy of some little attention.

No. 299. *Infuse half an ounce of cantharides in a pound of elixir of vitriol. - Give from 15 to 30 drops, or even 40 drops, in Bristol water, twice or thrice a day.*

As in this disease, the nutritious and balsamic parts of the blood are carried off by the kidneys, so that great weakness, emaciation, and hectic fever will come on, if the disorder is not very soon removed; it is to be hoped that every person affected with the diabetes, will have recourse to proper advice, on its first approaches.

Mr. W.'s prescription of cantharides in this disease, is equally absurd and dangerous; and the writer hopes no person will be so credulous or incautious as to make use of it.

### The Dropsy.

No. 300 to 323. Mr. Wesley gives 23 prescriptions for the cure of dropsies, and says such extraordinary things of some of them, that it were to be wished the facts had been better authenticated.

The Rev. Mr. GRANGER, in his ingenious biographical work, says of the *Primitive Physic*, that “this book, by the help of the title, hath had a good run among the Methodists, whose faith, co-operating with nature, frequently made them whole, when Mr. W. had the credit of the cure.”

### Drowned.

Mr. Wesley recommends, from Dr. Tissot, that the trunk of the body of a drowned person, should be rubbed all over with salt. It is not necessary to make any remarks on this; but I shall here take the liberty to observe, that as the society lately established in London, for the recovery of persons apparently drowned, &c. (an institution which my worthy and ingenious friend, Dr. COGAN, and myself, assisted by many respectable gentlemen, have been happily instrumental in introducing into this kingdom) have given their methods of treatment to the public, and which, in the space of eighteen months, have been the happy means of RESTORING FORTY-ONE PERSONS TO LIFE; it may reasonably be hoped, that these methods, the efficacy of which has been demonstrated by unquestionable facts, will be duly attended in all cases of this nature. Those who wish for further information on this subject, may meet with it in the PLAN and REPORTS of the Society, printed in the present year.

### On Fevers.

It is with regret that the writer trespasses on the patience of his readers, by troubling them with Mr. W's absurd division of fevers, and his very inconsistent remedies for a disease that carries off three parts of the human species; but it is necessary, in order to give them the more thorough conviction, that  
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the *Primitive Physic* is a publication calculated to lead those who rely upon it, to trifle with their lives, in the most dangerous and alarming diseases.

No. 402. Toasted bread and water can do no hurt in a fever; and it may, therefore, very safely be given, either in a *dry heat*, or a *moist heat*, to adopt the curious language of our profound practitioner.

It is not easy to meet with any quack, even the most assuming, who professes to cure diseases with more facility than Mr. W. If his directions are followed, disorders, of the most dangerous kind, disappear, as at the touch of the magician's wand. He cures a burning fever in an hour. What were *Hippocrates* or *Galen*, compared to John Wesley! *Stamp* (says he, 408) *a handful of leaves of woodbine; put fair water into it, and use it cold, as a clyster. It commonly cures in an hour.* A more expeditious remedy need scarcely be wished for; much is it to be regretted, that its efficacy is not somewhat better authenticated! But it is to be feared, that Mr. W's faith in this remedy is only founded, as implicit faith generally is, upon ignorance. He seems to have no idea, that the burning heat in a fever, will frequently abate on a sudden, and go off in an hour, and yet return again in a few hours, with equal violence; and what he supposes to have been a cure, could be only a temporary abatement; and even this is very unlikely to be procured in a burning fever, by a cold clyster.

Mr. W. may perhaps imagine, that when what he recommends as remedies are not manifestly pernicious, if he does no good, at least he does no harm. But this in many cases will be a most *egregious mistake*, and of this the present prescription is an instance. He recommends (No. 412) *thin water-gruel, or boiled milk and water, in a hectic fever.* As simple drinks, these can do no harm: but those who are led by their confidence in Mr. W's opinion, to rely upon these as  
probable

probable remedies for the cure of a hectic fever, may sustain an irreparable injury. By expecting relief from those things which cannot cure them, they are prevented from having recourse to those remedies which, if they had been taken in time, would have been efficacious. An hectic fever is a disease that requires judicious and attentive practice, and which seldom has a fatal tendency, if the sick person is not led by such dabblers in physic as Mr. W. to trifle too long with a disorder which, after a certain length of time, becomes incurable.

Of all the diseases to which human beings are subject, there is none which carries off so many as fevers. But Mr. W. is possessed of a remedy for them all, which is equally easy and infallible. *Plunging in cold water*, he says, (No. 413) is a *safe and a sure remedy in any fever*: and he even recommends this in a high fever, attended with a *delirium* and a *vigilia*, which are the most dangerous symptoms with which a fever can possibly be attended. It would be a happy circumstance if this remedy were as certain and as safe as Mr. W. represents it; but in this case his mere assertion is surely not sufficient, unless among the most credulous of his followers; and, unfortunately, he has not supported what he has advanced by any facts, or by any kind of evidence.

The next disease for the cure of which Mr. W. attempts to prescribe, is an *ague*, which he calls an *intermitting fever*, each fit of which is preceded by a *cold shivering*, and goes off in a *sweat*: for this he prescribes FORTY REMEDIES. It might have been presumed that these would have been sufficient; at least by a man who has said, “Experience shews  
“ that *one* thing will cure most disorders, at least as  
“ well as *twenty* put together. Then why do you  
“ add the other nineteen.” But though Mr. W. is offended that many remedies should be prescribed by other people, he himself does not think *forty* sufficient.



ficient. And therefore in the 80th page of his book he gives *five* more remedies for an intermitting fever, which are so different from those he prescribed for an ague, that he seems not to have known that they were the same disease, though he had said they were in the first page of his pamphlet. But Mr. W. is too strongly characterised by inconsistency, for any thing of this kind to excite our astonishment.

### A Nervous Fever.

No. 423. *Drink every night a tea-spoonful of cream of tartar, boiled in half a pint of milk.*

This prescription is nothing more than whey, and is the only one set down for the cure of this fever; and it is mere trifling with the patient in a disease which is occasioned by a great debility of the vital powers; so that a cream of tartar drink cannot possibly be of the least service, but will generally be highly injurious.

### A Rash Fever.

No. 424. *Drink every hour a spoonful of juice of ground-ivy. It cures in 24 hours. Use the decoction when you have not the juice.*

In a rash fever, as it is termed by Mr. W. and other ignorant people, he recommends that the patient should drink ground-ivy juice or decoction. This prescription is equally bold and unsupported; it is entirely inapplicable to the disease, and none but the weak and credulous will expect any relief from it.

### A slow Fever.

No. 425. *Use the cold bath for two or three weeks, daily.*

A nervous and slow fever, is generally allowed by practitioners to be one and the same disease; but we must not expect the author of the *Primitive Physic* to entertain

entertain the same ideas as the gentlemen of the Faculty ; for, in the nervous fever, his remedy is cream of tartar and milk : in the slow fever, no internal remedy whatever is advised, but he recommends, daily, the use of the cold bath, for two or three weeks. It is too true, that the nervous, or slow fever, is apt to continue several weeks, and the symptoms often become so irregular, that it requires the utmost attention to prescribe so as to give the remedies their greatest efficacy ; but Mr. W. with his usual indifference, indiscriminately orders cream of tartar and the cold bath, without paying the least regard to the different circumstances of this disorder, of which there are hardly two cases alike.

As the author did not sit down, merely with a view to expose the errors and absurdities of Mr. W.'s performance, but also with a design to offer his readers such observations as should occur to him, which might be of a beneficial tendency, he will here take the liberty of making a few general remarks, relative to Mr. W.'s method of classing fevers, and the mode of treatment recommended by him, in so violent and dangerous a disease.

Mr. Wesley classes fevers under the following heads : *a fever, a burning fever, an acute fever, a continual fever, a hectic fever, an intermitting fever, a fever with pains in the limbs, a nervous fever, a rash fever, and lastly, a slow fever.*

Upon which it may be observed, that Mr. W. has read or understood little of this subject, to consider a burning fever, an acute fever, a continual fever, and a fever with pains in the limbs, as different kinds of fevers. My experience and observation have convinced me, that what are here supposed to be four different kinds of fevers, are one and the same disease. As for instance, with respect to what is called a *burning fever* ; is there not more or less heat, in general, in fevers ? And is it not absurd, that, be-  
cause



cause the fever should be high at one time, and the heat then increased, that therefore it should be spoken of as a peculiar disease?

2dly, As to what is called an *acute fever*; as all fevers are universally allowed to be acute diseases, there can be no use or meaning in this discriminating term.

3dly, As to the phrase *continual fever*; are not all fevers continual, except intermittents? And what then is the meaning of this distinction?

4thly, As to what is termed a *fever with pains in the limbs*; in the very same fever, are not the different parts of the body, variously affected with the disease; sometimes pain in the head, sometimes pain in the limbs? If, then, we must have a new name for every accidental symptom that arises, we might have as many classes of fevers, as there are days in the year.

As to the *rasb fever*, Mr. W. does not inform us whether he means a miliary, a spotted, or a petechial fever, but advises the patient to drink the *juices of ground-ivy*, a medicine of no real virtue; so that it is directing the sick to trifle in a disease of a very dangerous nature, and which requires the skill of a sagacious practitioner.

It should also be observed, that Mr. W. has not, in the variety of fevers he has enumerated, given the symptoms of any one of them; so that the sick, or their friends, are left to guess at what kind it is, with which they are attacked; and when such a vague method of proceeding is to be adopted, is it not ten to one that they mistake the fever, and thus endanger the life of the patient?

Those who are called to the assistance of persons afflicted with fevers, ought to attend carefully to the symptoms and progress of the disease. It is a rule with me, in cases of this nature, to visit my patients

twice a day ; and I often find, that within the compass of a few hours, there is so great a change in the disease, that the plan I had formed in the morning, is absolutely improper in the evening. Now, how is it possible, that justice can be done to the afflicted, in a distemper which carries off such great numbers of the human species, without a knowledge of the causes, progress, and termination of diseases. It is *this*, and *this only*, that can lead to a rational and conscientious mode of treatment ; and whoever prescribes in acute diseases, when destitute of this knowledge, whether Mr. W. or any other Quack, will be in great danger of violating the eighth commandment. Tho' the most judicious practitioner cannot always cure fevers, yet it is a fortunate circumstance for the patient, when he is so happy as to be attended by a careful observer of nature, and of the operation of his remedies.

When persons are taken ill with fevers, apothecaries are generally sent for before a physician, and therefore they ought to be well acquainted with the duties of their profession. And when the apothecary is sent for in such a case, if he be possessed of skill and integrity (as many, it is presumed are, notwithstanding Mr. W's insinuations) he will not only consider the symptoms of the disease, but the state of the constitution, and thereby be led to a proper mode of treatment.

Among all [Mr. Wesley's remedies for fevers, *bleeding* is never once advised to lower the action of the vessels, which is exceedingly necessary when the pulse is hard, full, or strong, and there are other symptoms of inflammation in the habit ; nor does he once advise an *emetic* or a *purgative* at the beginning of fevers, altho' there may be symptoms indicating their use in the strongest manner, and caused by obnoxious matters in the first passages ; the removal  
of



of which, early in the disease, will often cause the fever to terminate in two or three days, when it would otherwise have run on for as many weeks.

It is of great importance that all diseases, and those of the acute kind in particular, should be taken care of in the beginning. A disease may be almost incurable after it has continued for some days, which might have been easily cured at the first attack. When a fever, or any internal inflammation is neglected for a day or two, or such improper and futile remedies used as are advised by Mr. W, or similar pretenders to physic, the former will frequently run on for many days, and the latter terminate in suppuration of the part, and probably both in their consequences prove fatal.

Mr. Wesley, like many others who have not paid a due attention to the history and progress of diseases, often prescribes only for *symptoms*. Thus, he has his *cold bath for delirium and vigilia*, his *lamb's-lungs also for delirium*, *hartshorn drops for a fever with pain in the limbs*, &c. And this leads me to remark, that I have been thoroughly convinced from seventeen years experience, that prescribing to particular symptoms, is a most dangerous mode of practice. There are some who will prescribe for the head-ach, others for pains in the limbs, &c. not reflecting that these are only symptoms of the disease called a fever; but because they are symptoms which give pain and uneasiness to the sick, they are particularly noticed by them. But it should be remembered, that those symptoms which *give no pain*, are the most dangerous part of the disease; such as the appearance of the eye, which shews the state of the brain; the *pulse* which shews the state of the vascular system; and the *tongue*, and *urine* which shews the state of the blood and the secretions. And when the fever goes off, these, as a part of the disease, will naturally go off also: but remedies which are prescribed merely for the removal of painful symptoms, are by no means

means the way to effect a radical cure of the disease termed a fever.

In the 24th page of his preface, Mr. Wesley intimates, that the art has been discovered of preparing quicksilver in such a manner, “as to make it the “most deadly of all poisons,” and he cautions his readers against it with great vehemence; but, notwithstanding this, Mr. W. advises (No. 426) for the cure of a fistula, a solution of corrosive sublimate in spring-water; and he says also, under this head, that the same medicine will, in forty days, *cure any cancer, or any running sore, or king’s evil, broken or unbroken*. His aversion to mercurials has not prevented him from here recommending one of the most active mercurial preparations, and one which requires the greatest skill to administer properly in diseases, and also the greatest care with respect to circumstances. And indeed no person can, with any prudence or safety, take this active medicine under no better directions than those given by Mr. W.

### Flegm.

No. 430. *To prevent or cure, take a spoonful of warm water the first thing in the morning.*

FLEGM. I confess, that I was for some time at a loss to know what the learned author meant by this word, which I do not remember ever to have met with before, and had searched many dictionaries without finding any such term. Neither did the ingenious prescription to prevent or cure *flegm* afford me any elucidation on this intricate subject; for I imagine a spoonful of warm water to be as much a panacea, or universal remedy, as it is a specific in any particular disorder. At last I conjectured *phlegm* might be meant, and that Mr. W. had pillaged some old manuscript of his grand-mothers for a recipe to  
pre-



*prevent or cure flegm* ; and that we might be certain of its authenticity, he had faithfully copied the old lady's orthography.

### A Flux.

No. 433. *Use the cold bath daily, and drink a draught of water from the spring.*

The cold bath is recommended for the cure of a flux, which must be exceedingly improper, as by suddenly contracting the superficies of the body, a load of fluids will be determined to the interior parts, so that the quick and great distension of the interior vessels will have a tendency rather to increase the flux than to cure it.

### A Bloody Flux.

No. 445. *Drink cold water as largely as possible, till the flux stops.*

Mr. W. advises a person affected with the bloody flux to “drink cold water ;” but what is more extraordinary than the remedy, he recommends that nothing else should be taken “till the flux stops.” Here a very ineffectual remedy is prescribed for a very dangerous disease, and if the patient is to take nothing else, he is consigned over to certain death, unless the flux stops of itself ; for no reasonable man can be of opinion that it will ever be stopt merely by drinking cold water.

No. 447. *Take a large apple, and at the top pick out all the core, and fill up the place with a piece of honey-comb (the honey being strained out) ; roast the apple in embers, and eat it, and this will stop the flux immediately.*

It were to be wished, that there was some evidence of the efficacy of this extraordinary remedy for the bloody flux ; for till this is produced, those who  
expect

expect a cure from it must be possessed of more credulity than understanding.

Mr. W. says, that *powdered root of gladwin is just as good as rhubarb* in most cases. But the superior efficacy of rhubarb has been so well ascertained, that this assertion would not have been made by any man, who was acquainted with the medical principles of these medicines.

No. 454. *A person was cured in one day by feeding on rice-milk, and sitting a quarter of an hour in a shallow tub, having in it warm water three inches deep.*

This rice-milk, shallow tub, and warm water prescription, is a very important one; but the good women who attend on this occasion must take especial care, that the water is *exactly three inches deep*, and that *the tub* is as *shallow* as the prescription.

To prevent (or stop a beginning) Gangrene.

No. 455. *Foment continually with vinegar, in which drops of iron (either sparks or clinkers) has been boiled.*

As a gangrene is an incipient mortification, which if it once spreads to a vital part, generally destroys, every honest and humane practitioner is always alarmed at the state of his patient; and if he be in indigent circumstances advises immediate recourse to hospital assistance; if otherwise, calls in a good surgeon and physician, to stop, if possible, a disease so dreadful in its consequences. Mr. W. however, contents himself with ordering an insignificant external application. But the writer of this most earnestly recommends, if there be any suspicion of a gangrene attacking any part, that the best assistance may be immediately applied for, as the delay of half an hour may prove the death of the person.

Mr. W.



Mr. W. prescribes no internal medicines for the removal of so serious a disease as a gangrene, but indeed we must not wonder that he does not order the bark, as in his preface, page 24, he says that it is one of the Herculean remedies, *far too strong for common men to grapple with. How many fatal effects have these* (he includes, *antimony, opium, steel and quicksilver*) *produced even in the hands of no ordinary physician.*

But to enable my readers to judge properly on this subject, I shall take the liberty of making a short extract from that ingenious and skilful surgeon, Mr. POTT. He says, “ the powers and virtues of the *bark* “ are known to almost every practitioner in physick “ and surgery. Among the many cases in which its “ merit is particularly and justly celebrated, are the “ distempers called *gangrene and mortification*; its “ general power of stopping the one and resisting “ the other, have made no inconsiderable addition “ to the success of the chirurgic art.” *Observations on the mortifications of the toes and feet, page 793.*

### The Gout in the Foot or Hand.

No. 460. *Apply a raw lean beef-steak. Change it once in twelve hours till cured.*

Instead of making any remarks of my own upon this curious remedy, I shall only here take the liberty of transcribing what hath been said in relation to it by the Rev. Mr. TOPLADY. “ In Mr. Wesley’s “ book of receipts, entitled *Primitive Physic*, he advises persons who have the gout in their feet or “ hands, to apply raw lean beef steaks to the part “ affected, fresh and fresh every twelve hours. Somebody recommended this dangerous repellent to “ Dr. T. in the year 1764 or early in 1765. He “ tried the experiment; the gout was, in consequence, “ driven up to his stomach and head, and he died

“ a

“ a few days after *at Bath*, where I happened to  
 “ spend a considerable part of those years; and  
 “ where at the very time of the Dean’s death, I  
 “ became acquainted with the particulars of that  
 “ catastrophe.

“ I am far from meaning to insinuate, because I  
 “ do not know, that the person who persuaded Dr.  
 “ T. to this fatal recourse derived the recipe imme-  
 “ diately from Mr. Wesley’s medical compilation.  
 “ All I aver is, that the recipe itself is to be found  
 “ there, which demonstrates the unskilful temerity,  
 “ wherewith the compiler sets himself up as a phy-  
 “ sician of the body. Should his quack pamphlet  
 “ come to another edition, ’tis to be hoped that the  
 “ *beef steak* remedy will, after so authentic and so  
 “ melancholy a probatum est, be expunged from  
 “ the list of specifics for the gout.—’Tis, I acknow-  
 “ ledge, an effectual cure. Cut off a man’s head, and  
 “ he’ll no more be annoyed by the tooth-ach;  
 “ Alas, for the *ingenium velox*, and for the *audacia*  
 “ *perdita*, with which a rash empiric, like Juvenal’s  
 “ *Græculus esuriens*, lays claim to universal science!

“ *Grammaticus, Rhetor, Geometres, Pictor,*  
*Aliptes.*”

“ *Augur, Schænobates, Medicus, Magus*” om-  
 nia novit \*

Mr. Toplady also observes, with reference to Mr. Wesley, “ *Aliquis in omnibus, nullus in singulis*. The  
 “ man who concerns himself in every thing, bids  
 “ fair not to make a figure in any thing. Mr. John  
 “ Wesley is, precisely this, *Aliquis in omnibus*. For  
 “ is there a single subject, in which he has not en-  
 “ deavoured to shine?—He is also, as precisely, a  
 “ *Nullus in singulis*. For has he shone in any one  
 “ subject which he ever attempted to handle?†”

\* Preface to the Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity, p. 9.

† Scheme, p. 9.



No. 478 to 501, Mr. W. gives a variety of external and internal remedies for different kinds of the head-ach, upon which I shall only observe, that as pains attacking any part of the head must take their rise from some cause, so it is impossible that any person can prescribe judiciously, without considering whether it be a febrile, an inflammatory, or a rheumatic pain in the head; or an affection of the brain or nervous system; or whether the head-ach arises from a disorder of the stomach or bowels. These circumstances should be duly considered, before any one can, with the least degree of propriety, attempt to prescribe remedies for the various disorders of the head.

### Heart-Burning.

No. 502 to 509, Mr. W. has prescribed a number of trifling recipes for the heart-burn. This complaint generally takes its rise from a weak and relaxed state of the digestive organs, and therefore it would have been better if Mr. W. (supposing him to have had any knowledge of the subject) had prescribed Tonics, which by strengthening the stomach, bid the fairest for removing this troublesome complaint.

### Hoarseness.

No. 515, *Rub the soles of the feet before the fire, with garlick and lard, well beaten together, over night. The hoarseness will be gone the next day.*

This is a very extraordinary prescription, but as such a very extraordinary character is given of its certainty of success; it is to be hoped that every person affected with a hoarseness, will rub the *soles of his feet*, “with garlick and lard” as by so doing, a disorder of the *throat* “will be gone the next day.”

Mr. W. has given such a farrago of absurd remedies for the various diseases for which he pretends

to prescribe, as are enough to exhaust the patience of any ordinary reader; but my duty to the public obliges me to proceed, notwithstanding the irksomeness of the task. To those afflicted with pains in the joints, he advises, (No. 539) that they should *drink a decoction of herb-robert, and apply it as a poultice*. Now, pains in the joints may arise from causes very different, and yet the pain which is only a symptom of the other diseases, is to be cured by a single herb. But in order to render herb-robert the more certainly efficacious, it is to be applied both internally and externally. The egregious quackery of all this is too manifest to need any further remarks.

### The Itch.

No. 540 to 549. If there be any disorder which Mr. Wesley understands, it appears to be *the Itch*; whether this be the result of his own feelings or experience, or of any other cause, I pretend not to determine; but his remedies for this cutaneous disease are more judicious than almost any other in his book.

### The King's-Evil.

From 550 to 558. Here are eight remedies for this inveterate disorder; but they all appear superfluous; for at No. 426 he has recommended a mercurial preparation, which he says will cure the King's-Evil in *forty days*. This is a very expeditious remedy for so stubborn a disease, so that if any dependance were to be placed on what Mr. W. first recommended, there would be little occasion to have recourse to any other prescription.

The



## The Legs inflamed.

No. 560. *Apply fuller's-earth spread on brown paper. It seldom fails.*

No. 561. *Or bruised turntps.*

No. 562. *Or boiled turnips mixed with mutton fat.*

No. 563. *Or rub them with warm juice of Plantane.*

These are external applications for *inflamed legs*; but persons so afflicted, should take care how they repel such appearances as external inflammation; for in acute diseases it is often a very happy termination or crisis of a very long and dangerous fever, &c. and in chronic disorders it will be at all times adviseable to mend the habit of body, before an attempt be made to remove this inflammatory symptom.

## Legs sore, and running.

No. 564. *Wash them in brandy, and apply elder leaves, changing them twice a day. This will dry up all the sores, though the legs were like honey-combs. Tried.*

No. 565. *Poultice them with rotten apples. Tried.*

If it were to be admitted that these *tried* remedies had all the efficacy in them that Mr. W. attributes to them, yet they should not be used but with great caution. For it is an established law in the human body, that when any discharge, from whatever cause, has continued any length of time, it then becomes *habitual to the constitution*; and therefore any astringent or repellent, which will cause a sudden check of the humors, will often be attended with the worst consequences to the general health; so that it is hardly ever safe to dry up *suddenly* a considerable flux of humours determined to any part, unless the habit

be mended by an alterative course, or an artificial out-let be made by an issue or seton, to unload the constitution, upon the drying up or cure of such running sores.

### The Lethargy.

From 575 to 578. Mr. Wesley gives several prescriptions for the cure of the lethargy, and among the rest he orders *white hellebore to be snuft up the nose*. This may prove a very dangerous remedy, as the lethargy is generally owing to an over-fulness of the blood-vessels, and particularly those of the head: now, any errhine, and especially one so powerful as hellebore, might, by its sudden and violent stimulus, cause an instant rupture of the vessels of the brain, and an apoplexy be the unhappy consequence. The lethargy is a complaint owing to an internal cause, and ought to be very seriously attended to, as it is often the forerunner of diseases of the most dangerous nature, such as apoplexy, palsy, &c.

No. 584 to 600. As Mr. W. is a universal practitioner, he prescribes for *lunacy, raging madness*, and the bite of a mad dog, as well as for other diseases; but unless the friends and relations of the unhappy persons so afflicted, are as mad as the patients, they will apply for proper advice and assistance, instead of relying on the modes of cure recommended by the author of Primitive Physic.

### The Measles.

No. 601. *Drink only thin water-gruel, or milk and water, the more the better; or toast and water.*

No. 602. *If the cough be very troublesome, take frequently a spoonful of barley-water, sweetened with oil of sweet almonds, newly drawn, mixt with syrup of maidenhair,*

The



The prescriptions are only suitable drinks, with a little oil and syrup to palliate the cough; but Mr. W. does not inform his readers that this infectious disease is always attended with considerable inflammation of the breast, and that the lancet is frequently to be used to remove the inflammatory affection of the lungs, as well as to prevent the future bad consequences of the measles. Nor does our author recommend any kind of physic to be given at the going off of the disease; though clearing the constitution of the remaining morbillous matter, is a circumstance of the utmost importance with regard to the general health. This disease, if it be attended to by a judicious practitioner, never turns out ill, either during its continuance or afterwards: but if proper precautions are not used during the inflammatory state of the disease, it generally settles upon the lungs; and thus, through neglect and inattention, vast numbers of children are carried off by the measles every year. No person ought then to slight the cough or other remaining symptoms of this disorder, although the patient should have been freed from the disease for a considerable time; as these are the warnings of the impending danger.

From 604 to 612, are a great variety of remedies advised for *menfes obstructed*, but no attention is paid to the age or the constitution; so that it is to be hoped, that the fair sex will pay little attention in this case to the recipes contained in the *Primitive Physic*; as it is not to be supposed that Mr. W.'s *female auditory* have consulted him much in this complaint. And if it be injudiciously prescribed for, it may lay the foundation for a future ill state of health, and for disorders which never can be removed.

Mr. W. has also from 612 to 620 sundry prescriptions for *menfes nimii*. I confess myself somewhat at a loss to know what were the reasons for using the word *nimii*. The word *menfes* is, I believe, generally

nerally understood ; but how the good women in the country are to comprehend the other word, I know not. They may indeed apply to the parson of the parish ; but should their delicacy prevent this, or the parson not happen to be in the way, they may flow on for the next month, before the female patient may know what these excellent recipes are good for. However the complaint referred to, ought not to be trifled with, but a due regard ought to be paid to age, constitution and other circumstances, to prevent the bad consequences resulting from the disorder.

### Old Age.

No. 629. *Take tar-water morning and evening. Tried.*

No. 630. *Or, decoction of nettles ; either of these will probably renew the strength for some years.*

No. 630. *Or, be electrified daily.*

Mr. Wesley, who is a most incomparable practitioner, has remedies for a disease, of all others the most inveterate, viz. *old age*. *Tar-water* is a *tried* remedy ; or if that *tried* prescription should be found not sufficiently efficacious, *decoction of nettles* ; and “ either of these,” he says, “ will probably renew the strength for some years.” Or if the patient still feels *old age* an unconquerable disorder, he recommends being *electrified daily*. This hint is worthy the attention of the ingenious Dr. PRIESTLY ; as when the arcana of electricity are compleatly laid open, an electrical shock judiciously administered, and repeated with sufficient frequency, might peradventure extend a man’s life to a thousand years ; or if it were only *five hundred*, it might be as advantageous to the public as Dr. PRIESTLY’s discoveries respecting fixed air ; though these have justly intitled  
this



this gentleman to that applause which he hath universally received in the philosophic world.

No. 652 to 664. These are external applications for the cure of the piles; but they deserve little regard. This is one of those disorders, which though very painful, generally tend to do great good to the constitution; for when a person is of a sanguineous or melancholic temperament, or his vessels act very strongly, this is the most happy determination that nature can take; and although the piles may return several times, and no evacuation of blood be occasioned, yet the stimulus is tending that way; and if the pain and uneasiness should be removed by repellents or astringents, it will often be at the hazard of the life of the patient. I have been a melancholy eye-witness of the truth of this assertion, in two or three cases in my own practice, where persons, from the uneasiness they suffered, have (contrary to my advice) rashly applied some astringent, which has suddenly removed the piles, and made a very slight and salutary complaint terminate in an apoplexy.

### The Pleurisy.

No. 675. *Apply to the side onions roasted in embers mixed with cream.*

No. 676. *Take half a dram of soot.*

No. 677. *Take out the core of an apple, fill it with white frankincense: stop it close with the piece you cut out, and roast it in ashes. Mash and eat it.*

No. 678. *A glass of tar-water, warm, every half hour.*

No. 679. *Decoction of nettles; and apply the boiled herb hot as a poultice. I never knew it fail.*

No. 680. *Boiled fennel, or camomile flowers.*

Soot

Soot and tar-water are the only internal remedies advised by Mr. W. for the cure of the pleurisy, except his *frankincensed apple*; he has indeed several prescriptions as external applications to the side. In almost every section the author of the Primitive Physic proves to a demonstration his ignorance of the animal œconomy, and even of the first principles of medical knowledge; but in no one more than the present; as he undoubtedly means that his recipes should be employed for the cure of the inflammatory pleurisy. Mr. W. appears to have hardly any idea of any thing in medicine, but removing pain, not considering that the pain in the side, in this case, is one of the symptoms of an inflammation of the pleura; and if the lancet is not freely used the first two or three days of the disease, it will terminate in an internal abscess, which formation of matter in the breast will most commonly kill the patient. Mr. W. in a note defines a pleurisy to be *a fever attended with a violent pain in the side, and a pulse remarkably hard*. But is it not extraordinary that he should give such a definition of the disease, and not order bleeding, which is a certain method of removing the hard pulse, as well as the other symptoms of inflammation? But instead of advising evacuation in an inflammatory disease, the author of the Primitive Physic prescribes *soot, tar-water, and frankincense*.

### To one poisoned.

No. 683. *Give one or two drachms of distilled verdigris, it vomits in an instant.*

Mr. Wesley directs, that to one poisoned, should be given ONE or TWO *drachms of distilled verdigris*. This destructive prescription was justly animadverted upon by a sensible writer, who signed himself ANTI-DOTE, in the Gazetteer of Dec. 25, 1775, and it was  
this



this gentleman's observations which first led me to peruse Mr. W.'s *Primitive Physic*; and which accordingly gave rise to these remarks upon that publication. In the letter referred to, Antidote says, "Every one who has the least acquaintance with the powers of medicine, will, I believe, be equally startled with myself at reading such a prescription. I could scarce believe my eye-sight for some time, nor can at present by any means account for the ignorance and presumption of a man who deals out as an antidote, one of the most active poisons in nature, in such an enormous dose, and this in such an undetermined quantity, as if the exact dose were immaterial." And Antidote further observes, addressing himself to Mr. W. "it is very probable that your dose of two drams would effectly poison 20 or 30 people, or operate very sensibly on every man, woman, and child, in one of your largest congregations."

Two drams of verdigris are indeed sufficient to poison forty or fifty people, and that such a direction should have been given in a book intended for general use, and which has passed through many editions, is a most alarming consideration, and ought to have given Mr. W. the greatest concern. But in answer to this charge he published the following letter in the *Gazetteer* of January 1, 1776.

To the PRINTER of the GAZETTEER.

Dec. 28, 1775.

"Between twenty and thirty editions of the *Primitive Physic*, or, A Rational and easy Method of curing most Diseases, have been published either in England or Ireland. In one or more of these editions stand these words. "Give one or two drachms of verdigris." I thank the gentleman

I

"who

“ who takes notice of this, though he might have  
 “ done it in a more obliging manner.

“ Could he possibly have been ignorant (had he  
 “ not been willingly so) that this is a mere blunder  
 “ of the printer? that I wrote *grains* not drachms?  
 “ However, it is highly proper to advertise the  
 “ public of this; and I beg every one that has the  
 “ book, would take the trouble of altering that  
 “ word with his pen.

“ Your’s, &c.

“ J. W E S L E Y.”

Mr. W. above says, that this dangerous error stands in *one or more of the twenty or thirty editions of the Primitive Physic, which have been published either in England or Ireland.* But this appears to be a most artful evasion; for this error is in the *fifth, the eighth, and the sixteenth* editions; and there is the greatest reason to believe, that it has passed through every edition; for though Mr. W. has been publicly called upon to point out the edition in which there was not this error, he has not been able to point out any one. He has indeed, with a jesuitism truly characteristic of himself, insinuated, though not asserted, in a letter inserted by him in the *Gazetteer* of Jan. 31, that this most dangerous and fatal blunder was referred to in the *errata*: but this insinuation appears to be totally without ground, for I could never meet with such a correction in any edition, and if it had ever been discovered before, it must have been the most culpable and shameless negligence, to have suffered so fatal a prescription to stand in the last edition.

In Mr. Wesley’s first letter, as given above, he asks, “ Could he (*Antidote*) possibly have been ignorant, (had he not been willingly so) that this is a  
 “ mere blunder of the printer? That I wrote  
*grains,*



*grains*, not *drams*?" This is, perhaps, the first time that ever any author had the modesty to censure his opponent, for not taking it for granted that he wrote right, when he was convicted of having written wrong. But as *Fly-Flap*, another writer in the *Gazetteer*, justly observes, "The weak attempt to throw the blame upon the Printer, is as uncandid as it appears improbable:" For, "the words, drams and grains, are so unlike, that it is almost impossible to mistake the one for the other."

It might have been expected, that Mr. Wesley, when he had discovered so dangerous a prescription in his book, (a prescription which might be of such fatal tendency) would have been exceedingly alarmed; and even, if he had been really destitute of the feelings of humanity, that he would, however, have pretended some concern, lest the blunder should have been productive of some mischief. But so far from expressing grief, he appears to rejoice in the hope, that the sale of his pamphlet would be increased by the attacks upon him, on this occasion.

In his letter in the *Gazetteer*, Jan. 31, he says, "In one respect, I am much obliged to the Gentlemen, (or Gentleman) who spends so much time upon the *Primitive Physic*; and would humbly intreat them to say something about it, (no matter what) in half a dozen more of your papers. If nothing was said about it, most people might be ignorant that there was any such tract in the world. But their mentioning it, makes more enquire concerning it, and so disperses it *more and more*."—Astonishing effrontery and insensibility!

If Mr. Wesley had considered the lives of his fellow-creatures, as an object of much concern, the least he could have done, it might reasonably be presumed, would have been to have cancelled the leaf wherein this dangerous blunder was, and to have caused another to have been printed, and inserted in

the unfold books. But he has done nothing like this ; he has only advertised the error in one paper ; at least I have seen it in no more. Since he has been attacked on this subject, I have caused one to be bought in Paternoster-Row, which had in it this dangerous prescription, not even altered with the pen. I have, indeed, since sent for one to the Foundry, wherein the blunder was slightly corrected with the pen : but was this all that ought to have been done by Mr. W. as a man of humanity, or can his negligence, in this respect, be judged consistent with any due regard to the lives of his fellow-creatures ? Indeed, it is somewhat extraordinary, that when the unexpected success of the *Primitive Physic*, had caused Mr. Wesley, as he says, *carefully to revise the whole, and to publish it again, with alterations*, so enormous a blunder should have passed through all the editions ; for this appears to have been in fact the case. But the truth probably was, that Mr. W.'s ignorance first occasioned this dangerous prescription, and the same ignorance continuing, prevented it from being corrected in any of the editions. This however, shews how little Mr. W.'s judgment is to be depended on ; and the little concern he expresses for leading his readers into an error, which to some may have proved so fatal, is a strong evidence of his insensibility. And when we consider the very extensive sale of his book, the credulity of his followers, and the extreme ignorance which is manifested in many of his prescriptions, may we not say nearly in his own words, *How many inconveniencies must this have occasioned ! How many constitutions may hereby have been ruined ! How many valuable lives have been lost !* \*

### The Quinsy.

No. 697. *Apply a large white bread toast, half an inch thick, dipt in brandy to the crown of the head, till it dries.*

\* Wesley's Preface, p. xxvii.



I am satisfied from experience, that exciting an inflammation upon the skin, near the part affected, has done much good ; and even this prescripton of *toast and brandy*, might, perhaps, have been usefully employed as a poultice to the outside of the throat ; but if applied to the crown of the head, though it be repeated till doomsday, it cannot be of the smallest advantage.

### A Quinsey of the Breast.

702. *Take eight or ten drops of laudanum lying down in bed.*

The learned and ingenious Dr. Heberden, in the second volume of the Medical Transactions, among many other very valuable observations, treats of a new disorder of the breast, which he calls *Angina Pectoris*. I shall here take the liberty to quote some of the Dr.'s judicious remarks upon this subject, and the rather as the work, from which they are extracted, is known to but few readers, except the faculty.

Page 59. “ Those who are afflicted with it, are  
 “ seized, while they are walking, and more particu-  
 “ larly when they walk soon after eating, with a pain-  
 “ ful, and most disagreeable sensation in the breast,  
 “ which seems as if it would take their life away, if  
 “ it were to continue or increase : the moment they  
 “ stand still, all this uneasiness vanishes. In all o-  
 “ ther respects, the patients are at the beginning of  
 “ this disorder, perfectly well, and in particular, have  
 “ no shortness of breath, from which it is totally  
 “ different.”

“ When a fit of this sort comes on by walking,  
 “ its duration is very short, as it goes off almost im-  
 “ mediately upon stopping. If it come on in the  
 “ night, it will last an hour or two ; and I have met  
 “ with

“ with one, in whom it once continued for several  
 “ days, during all which time the patient seemed to  
 “ be in imminent danger of death.

“ The pulse is, at least sometimes, not disturbed  
 “ by this pain, and consequently the heart is not  
 “ affected by it; which I have had an opportunity  
 “ of knowing by feeling the pulse during the pa-  
 “ roxysm.”

Page 66. “ BLEEDING, vomits, and other eva-  
 “ cuations, have not appeared to me to do any  
 “ good. Wine or cordials taken at going to bed,  
 “ will prevent or weaken the night fits; but nothing  
 “ does this so effectually as opiates. Ten, fifteen,  
 “ or twenty drops of *tinctura thebaica* taken at  
 “ lying down, will enable those to keep their beds  
 “ till morning, who had been forced to rise, and  
 “ sit up two or three hours every night, for many  
 “ months. Such a quantity, or a greater, might  
 “ safely be continued as long as it is required: and  
 “ this relief afforded by opium may be added to the  
 “ arguments, which prove these fits to be of a con-  
 “ vulsive kind.”

Mr. Wesley, in many parts of his *Primitive Physic*,  
 proves himself an adept in plagiarism; and many  
 authors, there is no doubt, from whom he has  
 borrowed, would do him no credit, had he mentioned  
 their names; but to have acted like a man of can-  
 dour, he should have informed the public, that  
 the discovery of this new disorder, as well as the mode  
 of treatment, was made by Dr. HEBERDEN, to whom  
 the honour of it ought certainly to have been attri-  
 buted. I think I cannot conclude this subject better  
 than by giving the Dr.'s own words relating to this  
 disease.—

Page 67, “ Time and attention will undoubtedly  
 “ discover more helps against this teizing and  
 “ dangerous ailment; but it is not to be expected,  
 “ that



“ that much can have been done towards establish-  
 “ ing the method of cure for a distemper hitherto so  
 “ unnoticed, that it has not yet, as far as I know,  
 “ found a place, or a name in the history of dis-  
 “ eases.”

### The Rheumatism.

No. 703 to 715. Here are twelve remedies pre-  
 scribed for the cure of this disorder ; but most of them  
 are so extremely insignificant that they deserve no  
 attention, and the only one that seems likely to have  
 any action would in all probability prove highly in-  
 jurious.

The rheumatism has been commonly divided into  
 two diseases, viz. the rheumatic fever and the chro-  
 nic rheumatism. The acute rheumatism, or rheu-  
 matic fever, as it is commonly called, generally at-  
 tacks young men, and those who are naturally of a  
 good constitution. It is generally attended at the  
 beginning, with a hard, strong, full pulse, and other  
 symptoms of general inflammation in the habit ; at  
 the first attack of this disease, copious and re-  
 peated bleeding can be the only useful remedy, which  
 if neglected for two or three days, or *guaiacum* (in  
 substance, or the volatile tincture) or Mr. W.'s re-  
 cipe, No. 708, *Steep seven cloves of garlick in half a  
 pint of white wine, drink it lying down* ; the heart, and  
 arterial system would be stimulated to so great a de-  
 gree, as to transfer the disease to the brain, or some  
 other vital part, which often in a few hours proves fatal.  
 And the writer, with the greatest concern, declares,  
 that he is thoroughly convinced, many lives have been  
 lost by the common mode of prescribing *guaiacum*,  
 and other heating remedies, at the beginning of rheu-  
 matic complaints.

No. 733 to 741. Are a variety of strange re-  
 remedies advised for the cure of the *sciatica*. One of  
 those curious prescriptoms is, *a mud made of powder-  
 ed pitcoal, and warm water*. But this mud will not  
 only cure the *sciatica*, but Mr. W. informs us, that it  
 also

also cures *palsies, weakness, weakness of the limbs, most disorders of the legs, and swellings and stiffness of joints.* And also that it cured a swelling of the elbow joint, though accompanied with a fistula, arising from a caries of the bone. How much is it to be regretted, that this *mud* is not better known, as it is so admirable a cure for so many incurable diseases ! Incredulous people, indeed, doubt the reality of these cures ; but we have Mr. W's authority in their favour, and this will surely satisfy all——except those obstinate people who require proof and evidence instead of assertion.

### A Sore Mouth.

No. 777. *Apply the white of an egg beat up with loaf sugar.*

No. 778. *Gargle with the juice of cinquefoil.*

No. 779. *Beat together a pound of treacle, three yolks of eggs, an ounce of bole armoniac, and a nutmeg of allum a quarter of an hour. Apply this to the sore part, or to an aching tooth. Tried.*

Mr. Wesley has here recommended several topical applications, but he did not consider, or probably was ignorant, that sores in the mouth, &c. frequently arise from internal causes, and unless the constitution is made better, such sores will seldom heal ; or, if they should, the disease will frequently fix upon some more internal part, and be much more dangerous than the original complaint.

### The Strangury.

No. 840. *Use the cold bath.*

The utility of the cold bath in the strangury is by no means apparent, it being a disorder of the urinary passages, which may arise from a great variety of causes, that bathing seems very little adapted to cure.

A Sur-



## A Surfeit.

No. 846. *Take about a nutmeg of the green tops of wormwood.*

A surfeit is a disorder which arises from various causes, and requires the attention of an able practitioner; but from whatever cause it may proceed, it is not very likely to be removed by the *tops of green wormwood*.

## To stop profuse Sweating.

No. 847. *Drink largely of cold water.*

Drinking largely of cold water has by some persons been recommended, and particularly in fevers, to occasion sweating, and may sometimes have been advantageous; but Mr. W. it is apprehended, is the first who ever advised this remedy *to stop profuse sweating*. But as he is a very uncommon practitioner, he may be considered as having the better right to prescribe uncommon modes of treatment.

## Swelled Legs.

No. 851. *Bathe them every morning in cold water, and take an easy purge twice a week.*

No. 852. *Take wormwood, southernwood, and rue; stamp them together, and fry them in honey till they grow dry: Then apply them as hot as you can bear.*

Mr. Wesley does not consider that *swelled legs* are only one of the symptoms of some other disease, as the tumour may be a symptom of inflammation, fever, rheumatism, &c. Now in all these disorders the above prescriptions may prove extremely injurious, and even in some cases destructive to the patient.

## A Swelled Throat.

No. 853. *Gargle with decoction of nettles.*

No. 854. *Or of primrose leaves.*

As swelling in the throat is generally only a symptom of an inflammation, or some other affection attacking the throat, what Mr. W. has recommended can be productive of no good to the patient. But the author of *Primitive Physic* has given many proofs of the mischief that may accrue to the sick, from those who prescribe remedies for diseases, with the nature of which they are unacquainted. Thus in p. 115 of his work he has prescribed for the quinsy; p. 127 for a sore throat; and now he has a separate section for a swelled throat; though these are only symptoms of one and the same disease.

To fasten the Teeth.

To clean the Teeth.

To prevent the Tooth-ach.

To cure the Tooth-ach.

Mr. W. has prescribed *only* twenty-two remedies for the teeth; some of which are to *fasten the teeth*, some to *clean the teeth*, others to *prevent the tooth-ach*; and several very unaccountable remedies to *cure the tooth-ach*.

The writer cannot help embracing this opportunity, for the benefit of his readers, of giving an extract from the ingenious Mr. RUSPINI's (*surgeon-dentist, Pall Mall*) *LITTLE TREATISE*, just published, which affords the strongest proofs of his skill in his profession, as well as of his humanity and generosity to the public.

Mr. RUSPINI, among many other very sensible observations, interspersed through his pamphlet, says, that, "Persons of all ages should clean their teeth constantly with proper dentrifices every night and  
" morn-



“ morning, and never omit to wash their mouths  
 “ well with water after eating ; otherwise particles of  
 “ meat, sweetmeats, and fruits, or many other  
 “ parts of our food, by remaining between or  
 “ about the teeth, will lay a foundation for future  
 “ mischief. By following this advice, the teeth of  
 “ people in general, but especially of children, will  
 “ be preserved from decay.”

“ If the teeth happen to be decayed or painful,  
 “ it has been the general custom to send for the  
 “ next tooth-drawer, who commonly has not any  
 “ idea of cure, but by *extirpating a tooth* ; a practice  
 “ replete with ignorance and barbarity, often fol-  
 “ lowed by dangerous and sometimes fatal conse-  
 “ quences, and therefore never should be perform-  
 “ ed except in those cases where no other remedy  
 “ promises any probability of success. As there are  
 “ a great variety of causes productive of pain in the  
 “ teeth and gums, so there are various means by  
 “ which ease may be procured ; but these, like all  
 “ other diseases to which the human frame is more  
 “ or less liable, require the knowledge of skilful  
 “ practitioners for their cure.

“ Ladies of tender constitutions, during preg-  
 “ nancy, are *often afflicted with pain in one or more*  
 “ *teeth* ; others afflicted in a similar manner by  
 “ colds ; others by nervous attacks. It would be  
 “ as absurd to loose a tooth in hopes of ease, that  
 “ should be painful from any of these, or many  
 “ other causes, as for a gouty man to part with a  
 “ painful toe, and suppose that his disorder would  
 “ be cut off with it. Experience shews, that the  
 “ causes and seats of pain are frequently in distant  
 “ places : numbers of persons have been deprived  
 “ of their teeth without receiving relief from their  
 “ pain, and suffer a severe operation without a pos-  
 “ sibility of benefit.”

## Extreme Thirst.

No. 890. *Drink spring water in which a little sal prunella is dissolved.*

As thirst is a symptom which is generally attendant on fevers, inflammations, rheumatism, dropsy, &c. it is only to be removed by the remedies proper for the cure of those disorders; but as this is a very troublesome and disagreeable sensation, the patient may be rendered much easier by sucking the *nitre*, *lozenges*, *tamarinds*, *lemon and sugar*, &c. but drinking gallons of water, or other fluids, will not remove this symptom when the fever is high, or any other acute disease is violent.

## Torpor (or numbness) of the Limbs.

No. 887. *Use the cold bath with rubbing and sweating.*

As torpor or numbness is generally a symptom of an incipient paralytic affection, I am firmly of opinion, that the cold bath is exceedingly improper in this case, and may prove highly injurious. Indeed, it might be imagined, that Mr. W. himself was apprehensive of its bad tendency; for immediately after recommending the *cold bath*, he advises *rubbing and sweating*. Now as it is generally allowed, that internal stimulants are necessary as well as external applications to the numbed part, certainly then the cold bath as a remedy can be productive of no good effect.

## The Tympany, or windy Dropsy.

No. 899. *Use the cold bath with purges intermixed.*

No. 900. *Mix the juice of leeks and of elder. Take two or three spoonfuls of this morning and evening. Tried.*



As the tympany is a disease resulting from a weak and relaxed state of the stomach and bowels, and which occasions great quantities of air to be generated from the food, &c. and collected in the first passages, so as to distend them to a very considerable degree, there is not the least reason to suppose that the cold bath or purgatives can be proper: but indeed it is so disagreeable and troublesome a disease, that it will generally oblige the afflicted to apply for proper advice, and therefore there is the less danger of mischievous consequences resulting from Mr. Wesley's directions.

No. 923. *Drink tar-water morning and evening.*

No. 924. *A decoction of pimpernel.*

No. 925. *Take decoction of agrimony thrice a day.*

No. 926. *Or, decoction, powder, or syrup of horsetail.*

### An inward Ulcer.

As internal ulcers are the consequences of inflammation of some viscus, membrane, or muscular part, which from neglect or improper treatment at the beginning of the disorder, frequently terminates in suppuration, and requires the greatest medical skill to prevent its being fatal to the patient; as the ulcer when once formed, from a variety of internal causes, is very apt to spread, and the matter is thereby absorbed into the circulating mass, so as to stimulate the heart and arterial system, bring on an hectic fever, and prove fatal; it is therefore extremely absurd that Mr. W. should order such insignificant remedies to remove a disease, that is apt to be attended with such melancholy consequences.

### To stop Vomiting.

No. 943. *Apply a large onion slit to the pit of the stomach. Tried.*

That

That a slit onion applied externally should be a good and a *tried* remedy for an internal disease, is somewhat extraordinary: but extraordinary remedies can excite no surprize, to any man who is well read in Mr. W.'s *Primitive Physic*, and who gives any degree of credit to the marvellous assertions which are contained therein.

No. 945. *Infuse an ounce of quicksilver in a large glass full of water for twenty-four hours. Then drink the water: I.*

This is given as an infallible prescription; for the unerring letter *I* is affixed to it; but as the writer is no friend to implicit faith, he is apt to entertain some doubts of its efficacy. When a person is afflicted with a vomiting, according to Mr. W.'s rule, he must wait 24 hours before he can apply his remedy; and when it is procured, it is not very probable that any good effects can be produced from it, as not the ten thousandth part of a grain will be dissolved in the menstruum, (the water) and will prove as insipid and inefficacious as the water would have done, before the digestion of the quicksilver and water had taken place.

Mr. Wesley prescribes many remedies to stop vomiting; but he never once recommends the mints, *camomile*, or *carduus*, though infusions of these stomachic and bitter vegetables, are often very serviceable in many complaints of the stomach, such as sickness, retchings, and vomiting. Indeed, Mr. Wesley, in his wonderful performance, seems disposed to fall out with the good old women, as well as with the apothecaries; for the remedies that the former have and do often prescribe with success, he has taken no notice of: but he has in sundry diseases recommended things much more absurd and injurious than what are advised by them.

As



As we are on the subject of vomiting, the reader will perhaps excuse me, if I make a little digression, relative to what has appeared to me to be a frequent cause of a propensity to vomiting. I have often observed upon enquiry, when sent for to patients affected with complaints of the stomach or bowels, that they had over-night, or the preceding day, *drank punch*; and from the effects, and the smell of the matters thrown up, had every reason to think, that instead of lemon juice, the acid used was the vitriolic spirit; and, indeed, it is hardly possible for any one to know in such a farrago as punch, what kind of ingredients it consists of.

I am firmly convinced, that there is hardly any thing tends so much to weaken and relax the stomach, and bring on various ill consequences, such as indigestion, loss of appetite, &c. as bad punch. And therefore I earnestly advise the *punch drinkers* to have their fruit, spirits, &c. brought to them separately, and to become *punch makers*; by which means they will know what the compound consists of, and that it is not a composition of bad spirits, vitriol, &c. Indeed, I would recommend, that preserved *lemon juice* should never be used, as it is always running into new fermentations, and though not so bad as vitriol, yet is by no means so wholesome as the juice when squeezed immediately from the fruit itself. As vomiting and other disagreeable symptoms affecting the stomach, may eventually injure the whole system; because the stomach can never be long disordered, without mischief arising to the animal œconomy in general; therefore these hints may not be unworthy of attention, and if they are productive of any utility, there will be the less reason to apologise for the digression.

## Bloody Urine.

No. 946. *Take a quarter of a pint of sheeps milk twice a day.*

## Urine by Drops, with heat and pain.

No. 949. *Drink nothing but lemonade. Tried.*

No. 950. *Beat up the pulp of five or six roasted apples, with near a quart of water; take it lying down. It commonly cures before morning.*

## Involuntary Urine.

No. 952. *Take a tea-spoonful of powdered agrimony morning and evening.*

No. 953. *A quarter of a pint of alum posset drink every night.*

## Sharp Urine.

No. 955. *Take two spoonfuls of fresh juice of ground ivy.*

## Suppression of Urine.

No. 957. *Drink largely of warm lemonade. Tried.*

No. 958. *Or a scruple of nitre every two hours.*

No. 960. *A spoonful of juice of radishes.*

No. 962. *Or of bruised mustard-seed.*

Mr. Wesley prescribes several remedies for *bloody urine, urine by drops, involuntary urine, sharp urine, and suppression of urine*; but these retentions and suppressions of the urine, &c. may be owing to some fault in the urinary passages, such as gravel lodging in some of these parts, the stone, the dropfy, the venereal disease, or even to inflammation or spasmodic affection of the kidneys, ureters, &c. so that the numerous prescriptions advised by Mr. W. cannot



cannot possibly be taken to advantage without knowing from what cause it proceeds.

### The Whites.

No. 977. *Live chafly. Feed sparingly. Use exercise constantly. Sleep moderately, but never lying on your back.*

No. 978. *Take eight grains of jalap every eight days. This usuall cures in five weeks.*

No. 981. *Make Venice turpentine, flour, and fine sugar, equal quantities, into small pills. Take three or four of these morning and evening.*

No. 983. *After a purging take about fifteen grains of ceruse of antimony in white wine, twice or thrice a day.*

Here are many recipes prescribed for the *fluor-albus*. This is a very troublesome disease, and as it may be owing to a variety of causes extremely difficult of cure; but Mr. W. has advised several remedies, and not a few, which he seems to think *infallible*, for those distempers which the faculty find the most stubborn, and the most difficult to remove. And indeed, if it was as easy for Mr. W. to perform cures as it is to write recipes, he would be universally allowed to be superior to a Huxham, a Mead, or a Boerhave.

As the complaints mentioned from 1003 to 1012 are the object of surgery, and treat of various kinds of *wounds*, for which it is impossible to lay down any general mode of treatment; as the dressing must be varied according to the state of the wound, and other attendant circumstances, it cannot reasonably be expected that Mr. W.'s recipes would be of any use, and it must therefore be needless to comment on them,

Mr. Wesley concludes his *Primitive Physic* with the wonderful cures performed by *cold-bathing, washing the head, water-drinking, electrifying*, and lastly *fasting-spittle*, which, *outwardly applied*, he informs us, *sometimes cures blindness and deafness*, besides various other disorders; and, *taken inwardly*, it *relieves or cures cancers, the gout, the king's evil, the leprosy, the palsy, the rheumatism, the stone, &c. &c.* He seems indeed to have been rather profuse of his remedies, which is hardly consonant to his own sentiments. For in his preface he says, "Experience  
 " shews that one thing will cure most disorders, at  
 " least as well as twenty put together. Then why  
 " do you add the other nineteen?" Indeed, it seemed hardly necessary that Mr. W. should publish a book containing 1012 recipes, when, according to his account, the above *five* remedies will cure almost every acute and chronic disease incident to the human body. Mr. W. says, p. 154, that *cold bathing cures young children of convulsions, coughs, cutaneous inflammations of the ears, navel and mouth, vomiting, &c. &c.* But I am clearly of opinion, that if the cold bath be used in these various diseases of young children, agreeable to Mr. W's recommendation, the lives of many children will be sacrificed in consequence. In many of the complaints for which it is prescribed, it is totally improper; and in others that are mentioned it can do no good. And even where it is proper, it requires a little more attention than Mr. W. pays to the subject; and indeed even common nurses appear to understand this matter better than he does. For they are seldom or never so absurd as to dip a child that is afflicted with coughs, cutaneous or other inflammations, vomiting, &c. But to enter into a particular examination of every absurdity advanced by Mr. Wesley, would be equally tedious to me and my readers. What has been advanced, it is presumed, may be sufficient to shew the futility of many  
 of



of his prescriptions, the pernicious tendency of others, and his total incapacity to produce any medical treatise calculated to be of the least service to mankind.

A book that has passed through so many editions as the *Primitive Physic*, must have been attended to by great numbers; and as the recipes in it are often so injudicious, absurd, and so strongly characterized by ignorance of the human body, and of the power and operation of medicines, they may have been productive of great mischief. These considerations will, I hope, be considered as a sufficient apology for this publication. I have no personal animosity against Mr. Wesley, to whom I am totally unknown; nor have I been induced to engage in this performance, by any consideration, respecting the part Mr. W. has taken in the political world. Every thing of this kind is foreign to the design of this examination of the *Primitive Physic*. But I have ever wished to understand the principles of the medical art, to be useful in my profession, and serviceable to my fellow-creatures; and if this little piece be found by the candid and judicious to be of that tendency, I shall not regret the pains I have taken. I am conscious of the uprightness of my intentions, and therefore hope to meet with indulgence from the public.

F I N I S.

